EDITOR
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Safiye SARI

INTERPRETING CULTURAL HERITAGE IN CONTEMPORARY DESIGN

BZT TURAN

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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Safiye SARI

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Preface

This edited volume, "Interpreting Cultural Heritage in Contemporary Design," brings together contributions from multiple authors, each exploring the dynamic relationship between cultural heritage and contemporary creative practices. By compiling these diverse perspectives under a single framework, this volume offers a comprehensive view of how historical and cultural knowledge can be reinterpreted and applied across different design disciplines.

From the storied urban landscape of Istanbul, analyzed through travelogues, to the rich textures of traditional hand-woven textiles from Turkey's geographical regions, the transformative power of heritage emerges as a central theme. The reinterpretation of motifs from Erzurum and Tabriz into sculptural accessory designs demonstrates how historical and symbolic elements can be translated into contemporary, functional art objects. Similarly, the study of lettering, calligraphy, and typography traces the evolution of visual language, highlighting the dialogue between past practices and modern design thinking. By bringing together these seemingly disparate domains—urban cultural representation, textile transformation, accessory design, and visual language—this edited volume emphasizes the shared processes of interpretation, adaptation, and creative recontextualization. Readers will encounter not only analyses of historical and cultural materials but also insights into their relevance and application within contemporary design.

Ultimately, this collection underscores that cultural heritage is not merely a static remnant of the past but a living, dynamic resource that continues to inspire and inform contemporary design practices.

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CHAPTER 1

THE CONVERSION PROCESSES OF TRADITIONAL WEAVINGS SAMPLED FROM GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS OF TURKİYE INTO CLOTHING[1]

Betül ELİBOL[2]

Safiye SARİ[3]

1. Introduction

Turkish weaving tradition is not merely a historical handicraft practice; it is a multi-layered cultural memory that carries the aesthetic and functional codes of social life through production methods, material preferences, and surface structures. The weaving culture, shaped during the transition from a nomadic lifestyle to a settled order, has shown regional differences in line with geographical conditions, access to raw materials, and local production practices. These differences have been decisive not only in the technical

1 This study was produced from the results of the project titled *"The Process of Transforming Traditional Weavings Sampled from the Geographical Regions of Türkiye into Garments",* coded SSY-2021-10204, conducted under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Safiye SARI and supported by the Atatürk University Scientific Research Projects Coordination Unit (BAP).

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structure of the weavings but also in their intended uses and their relationship with the garment.

Traditional hand-woven fabrics are often addressed through motifs, patterns, or symbolic meanings; however, the processes of transferring these weavings into garment design are not sufficiently discussed in the context of the material–form–surface relationship. Yet, weaving is not just a surface in garment design, but also a structural component that guides design decisions. The weft–warp relationship, yarn type, and weaving technique directly determine the form possibilities of the garment.

A significant portion of existing studies on traditional hand-woven fabrics in Türkiye focuses on a specific region or a single type of weaving; holistic approaches that comparatively address the design potentials of weavings produced in different geographical regions remain limited. This situation renders the transformative role of weaving in garment design invisible and weakens the transfer of traditional production knowledge to contemporary design processes.

This study aims to address the traditional hand-woven fabrics produced in the seven geographical regions of Türkiye through their transformation processes into garment design. Weavings were evaluated not only as cultural examples but also as design inputs in line with technical structure, material properties, and sewability criteria. Thus, the decisive effect of each weaving on the garment form was revealed.

The weavings selected within the scope of the study were limited to samples with cotton and wool-based weft-warp structures, produced on shuttle looms, and possessing qualities suitable for outerwear design. In regional selections, criteria such as accessibility, raw material supply, and production continuity were decisive. In this framework, seven different traditional weavings belonging to the Central Anatolia, Black Sea, Marmara, Mediterranean, Aegean, Southeastern Anatolia, and Eastern Anatolia regions were examined comparatively in the context of garment design. This approach proposes rethinking traditional weavings not only as cultural heritage elements to be protected but as active structures producing knowledge for contemporary garment design.

2. Conceptual Framework and Discussion of the

heritage, handicrafts, and local production practices. Studies on ‘weaving’, ‘traditional hand-weaving’, and ‘the art of weaving’ emphasize the historical continuity and cultural importance of this form of production. However, a

significant part of these studies positions weaving as a historical or ethnographic object; it addresses the structural relationship it establishes with garment design at a secondary level.

Early studies on the origins of weaving reveal that this field is a production practice as old as human history. Öz (1964) states that weaving in centers such as Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia was not only an activity for daily needs but also an advanced field of art within organized production systems. The use of natural fibers such as flax and wool from early periods shows that weaving is a technical tradition shaped by material knowledge. This historical framework is important in terms of revealing that weaving carries structural production knowledge, not just a decorative surface.

When considered in the context of regional differences, it is seen that weaving developed with different techniques, colors, and ornamentation concepts in every geography. Öz (1964) emphasizes that weaving differs significantly in technical and aesthetic terms in Egyptian, Central Asian, Anatolian, and Western civilizations. This differentiation has caused weavings to differ not only at the motif level but also in terms of usage patterns and their relationship with the garment. Despite this, discussions in the literature on how these differences are reflected in garment design processes remain limited.

The production and transfer processes of traditional weavings are explained through a family-based structure in most studies. The data reported by Torun and Torun (2011) regarding Beypazarı weaving show that weaving is passed down from generation to generation as a collective production practice. However, this transfer model has largely lost its sustainability under today's conditions. The disconnection of young generations from production processes has led to a weakening of the bond between weaving and daily life and clothing practices. Yanar and Erdoğan (2019) state that one of the main factors threatening the sustainability of cultural heritage is the inability of traditional production forms to adapt to changing social and economic conditions. This situation makes it difficult for traditional weavings to survive; weaving ceases to be a living production practice and turns into an object that is exhibited or archived.

While this literature framework creates a strong awareness for the protection of traditional weavings, it does not offer concrete models on how weaving can regain function within contemporary garment design. The starting point of this study is located exactly in this gap. Traditional weavings produced in different geographical regions were evaluated not only by motif and color values, but also through texture, technical structure, and sewability properties and integrated into garment design processes. Thus, weaving was handled

as an active input of design knowledge, rather than being a passive cultural heritage element.

3. Method

This study was prepared in a qualitative research model aiming to examine the transformation processes of traditional hand-woven fabrics into garment design. The research design is based on a design-oriented approach that brings together literature review and field-based multiple case study. In this context, traditional weavings were handled not only as described cultural objects, but as structural cases that generate knowledge in the garment design process.

The data collection process of the research was carried out in two basic stages. In the first stage, a literature review was conducted on traditional hand-woven fabrics produced in the seven geographical regions of Türkiye; the technical characteristics, raw material uses, and traditional usage patterns of the weavings were examined. In the second stage, applied workshop processes were included. The case set of the study consists of traditional hand-woven fabrics produced on shuttle looms, selected from seven geographical regions of Türkiye, with cotton-wool yarn used in their weft and warp. In the selection of weavings; the use of cotton and wool in weft and warp yarns, the sewability of the weaving, and its ability to allow for outerwear design were determined as the main criteria. These selections aim to evaluate the direct applicability of weavings in the garment design process through an experimental way.

The data obtained were not evaluated only at a descriptive level; the garment design process was used as the analytical tool of the research. The texture, color, technical structure, and surface properties of the weavings were transformed into garment forms through design sketches and digital drawings; in this process, how the weaving guided design decisions was analyzed. Thus, design was positioned as an active component of the research process rather than an aesthetic result. The digital drawings developed during the transfer process of traditional hand-woven fabrics to garment design created a unique intermediate language that made the weaving–form relationship visible. These digital productions allowed for both the systematic evaluation of field data and the multi-layered reading of the design potential of weaving. This methodological approach makes it possible to evaluate traditional weavings not only as cultural objects to be protected, but as knowledge-producing structures that can be integrated into contemporary garment design.

4. Findings

In this section, the findings obtained from the transformation processes of traditional hand-woven fabrics selected from the seven geographical regions of Türkiye into garment design are presented. Each weaving was handled in line with its technical structure, texture, color, and surface characteristics; the decisive effects of these characteristics on the garment form were analyzed.

The data obtained during the research process revealed that traditional weavings function not as a passive surface in garment design, but as an active structure that guides design decisions. The weft–warp density, yarn type, and surface hardness of the weavings directly affected whether the garment form was fluid or structural. This situation showed that the weaving of each region required different design solutions. The artistic and graphic drawings prepared during the application process were used as an analysis tool that made the relationship between the weaving and the garment form visible. Through the drawings, it was determined how the surface characteristics of the weaving would be positioned on the garment, and at which points the cutting and sewing decisions were limited or transformed. This stage revealed that the design process is not only an aesthetic but also an experimental area of inquiry.

The sewing process emerged as a critical stage testing the suitability of weavings for garment design. The limited flexibility and thickness characteristics of some weavings necessitated a rethinking of the classical pattern understanding; this led to the development of alternative cutting and joining solutions. Thus, weaving has become an element that determines the direction of the design, rather than being a material that sets limits in the garment production process. The resulting garment designs provided the opportunity to comparatively evaluate the design potentials of regional weavings. The applications carried out with weavings from seven different regions showed that traditional weavings cannot be handled with a single type of design approach; that each weaving requires unique design solutions in line with its own technical and aesthetic character. This finding reveals that traditional weavings should be evaluated not as standardized surfaces in contemporary garment design, but as dynamic inputs that produce different design strategies.

4.1. Beypazarı Bürgü Weaving

Beypazarı bürgü weavings are weft-faced fabrics traditionally produced on looms called Çulfalık, with a cotton warp and a weft consisting of silk, rayon, or cotton yarn. These weavings, which are structurally based on the plain

weave, create a distinct texture effect on the surface with the ribs technique, which is a derivative of the plain weave. This technical structure strengthens the surface character of the weaving and increases the visual dominance of the weft yarn. The weft-faced structure of the bürgü weaving examined within the scope of the research necessitated a design approach that prioritizes surface perception in the garment design process.

The distinct textural effect of the weaving caused a preference for simple and controlled cuts in the garment form; thus, the visual density of the weaving surface was not suppressed by form complexity. This allowed the bürgü weaving to be evaluated as a surface that determines the main character of the design, rather than a decorative element on the garment. The surface hardness and limited flexibility obtained with the ribs technique were decisive in the pattern and sewing stages. The structural properties of the weaving led to the development of semi-structural silhouettes that emphasize vertical lines instead of form-fitting shapes. In this context, bürgü weaving functioned as an active design input shaping form decisions, rather than just a material choice. These findings reveal that Beypazarı bürgü weaving has the potential to establish a strong surface and form relationship in contemporary garment design, beyond its traditional usage context.

4.1.1. The process of transforming textiles into clothing

Image 1. Artistic and graphic drawing regarding the weaving

Image 2. Garment application process; joining front and back body pieces (side seam and shoulder) (a), intermediate ironing process (b), interfacing and sewing the collar (c and d), lining (e), sewing the belt piece (f)

Image 3. Design visual for the Beypazarı Bürgü weaving garment

4.2. Sarı Kıvrak Weaving

Sarı Kıvrak (Sarıgıvrak) is a traditional hand-woven fabric specific to the Kastamonu region, woven using 100% cotton yarn. The basic color of the weaving is in ecru tones, the natural raw color of the cotton fiber, and the surface composition is animated with burgundy colored stripes. Patterning is not created with printing or post-applied surface treatments, but by including colored yarns into the weft and/or warp yarns during the weaving process. The natural structure of the cotton fiber and the weaving density allow the Sarı Kıvrak weaving to offer balanced use in different seasonal conditions.

This feature has ensured that the weaving is preferred both in daily life and in home textile products that require long-term use. Sarı Kıvrak weaving is evaluated not only as a functional textile product in the Kastamonu region, but also as a cultural symbol. The inclusion of Sarı Kıvrak sheets in the dowry chest of young girls and boys to be married in the region clearly demonstrates the value the weaving carries in social memory and its function of transfer between generations. In this respect, Sarı Kıvrak is one of the important examples reflecting the multi-dimensional structure of traditional hand-woven fabrics with its production technique, use of natural materials, and cultural meaning layers.

4.2.1. The process of transforming textiles into clothing

Image 4. Artistic and graphic drawing regarding the weaving

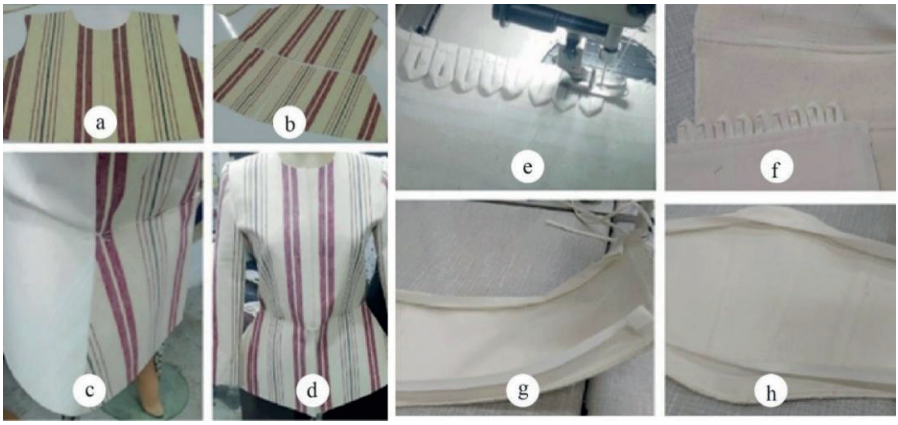

Image 5. Garment application process; cutting the fabric and preparing body pieces (a and b), sewing front and back body pieces (c and d), sewing belt loops (e and f), edge finishing and lining processes of the belt (g and h)

Image 6. Design visual for the Sarı kıvrak weaving garment

4.3. Şile Weaving

Şile Bezi is a hand-woven fabric traditionally woven with cotton yarn in the weft and warp in the Marmara Region, known for its light and breathable structure. The limited availability of written sources regarding the emergence of weaving shows that Şile Bezi production has reached the present day largely through oral transfer and application-based knowledge. This weaving type, known to have a history of approximately one hundred and fifty years, was also produced with silk, flax, and wool yarns in the historical process; however, today, cotton yarn has come to the fore as the basic material (Tüm Cebeci, 2022).

The cotton-based structure of the Şile Bezi weaving examined within the scope of the research necessitated an approach focused on lightness and comfort in the garment design process. Its fine woven structure and high air permeability supported the use of the weaving in garment forms in direct contact with the body; this led to a preference for fluid and comfortable silhouettes in design decisions. In this respect, Şile Bezi encouraged design solutions that prioritize freedom of movement rather than structural forms.

The use of different fiber types in the historical process shows that Şile Bezi has a flexible weaving tradition capable of adapting to changing usage needs. The dominance of cotton yarn today has allowed the weaving to be repositioned in the context of daily wear and summer outerwear. This transformation has made it possible to evaluate Şile Bezi as a functional material in contemporary garment design while preserving its traditional identity. The findings reveal that Şile Bezi weaving, beyond being a superficial traditional textile product, offers a strong design input that guides garment design through lightness, comfort, and form flexibility.

4.3.1. The process of transforming textiles into clothing

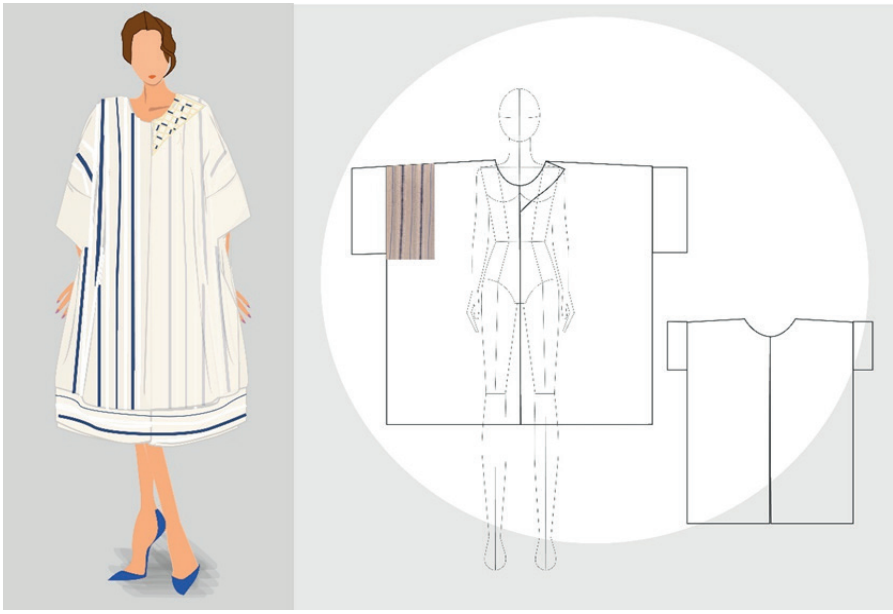

Image 7. Artistic and graphic drawing regarding the weaving

Image 8. Garment application process; arrangements of fabric bias tapes (a and b), preparation of the collar form (c, d, and e), application of decoration details (f), garment sewing processes

Image 9. Design visual for the Şile bezi weaving

4.4. İbecik Weaving

Dastar is a hand-woven fabric traditionally used in and around the Mediterranean Region, known for its function as a headscarf. Field research shows that this weaving is produced by a limited number of masters today and its area of use has largely narrowed. The fact that production is mostly carried out on a custom-order basis stands out as one of the main factors making it difficult for the weaving to achieve continuity and widespread use.

The findings obtained during the research process revealed that the limited use of İbecik cloth stems not only from cultural indifference, but also from the incompatibility of the production scale with contemporary clothing practices. The fact that the weaving is identified with a specific function (headscarf) has caused its design potential to go unnoticed for a long time. This situation necessitated the evaluation of the transfer of weaving to garment design also as an intervention aimed at expanding its areas of use.

The pattern and motif arrangement on the surface of the İbecik cloth functioned as a decisive aesthetic element in the garment design process. The rhythmic and repetitive structure of the patterns created a guiding effect in the garment form; this allowed for the development of design solutions

that prioritize the surface–form relationship. In this respect, the weaving was evaluated not only as a decorative surface, but as an active element shaping the design composition. The use of İbecik cloth in garment design within the scope of this study showed that the weaving can be carried beyond its traditional functional boundaries. The findings reveal that this weaving, which carries the risk of disappearing due to limited production and narrow usage area, offers significant potential for cultural transfer through re-functionalization through design.

4.4.1. The process of transforming textiles into clothing

Image 10. Artistic and graphic drawing regarding the weaving

Image 11. Garment application process; model applications (a), sewing body pieces (b and c), loop attachment processes (d), ironing and completion of the sewing process (e and f).

Image 12. Design visual for the İbecik bezi weaving

4.5. Buldan Weaving

In the Aegean Region, both silk and cotton hand weaving are widely practiced. Due to the region's role as one of the major supply centers for cotton yarn production, it holds particular significance and influence within the broader context of textile production. From this perspective, dominance over cotton raw materials and regional control have constituted one of the key parameters in selection and evaluation processes related to hand weaving.

The Buldan district of Denizli province has historically hosted a wide variety of hand-woven textiles and continues to do so to a limited extent today. However, in recent years, traditional handlooms have largely been replaced by fully automated looms. As a result, hand weaving has significantly declined and has been carried into the present day by only a small number of master artisans.

4.5.1. The process of transforming textiles into clothing

Image 13. Artistic and graphic drawing regarding the weaving

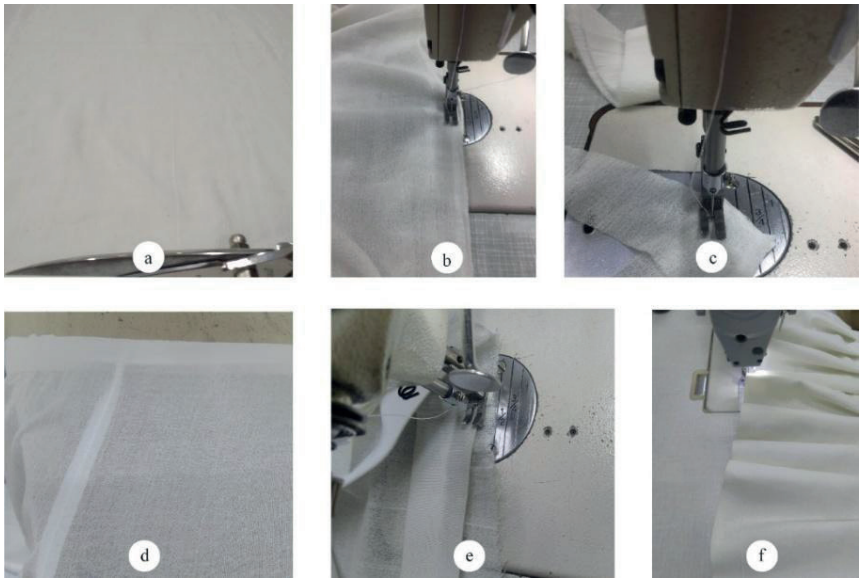

Image 14. Garment application process; sewing front and back body pieces (a and b), sewing bias tapes (c), ironing processes (d), sewing the dress (e), and application of the collar (f)

Image 15. Design visual for the Buldan bezi weaving

4.6. Kutnu Weaving

Kutnu weaving has an important place in traditional Turkish weaving arts and was historically used in palace fabrics. Thanks to its silk-dominant yarn structure, it has a shiny and flamboyant surface. The striped pattern arrangement and rich color variety make Kutnu weaving aesthetically strong. Within the scope of the study, the fiber structure, surface brightness, and pattern character of the Kutnu weaving were evaluated as the basic factors determining the infrastructure of the design; the effect of these features on the garment form was analyzed.

4.6.1. The process of transforming textiles into clothing.

Image 16. Artistic and graphic drawing regarding the weaving

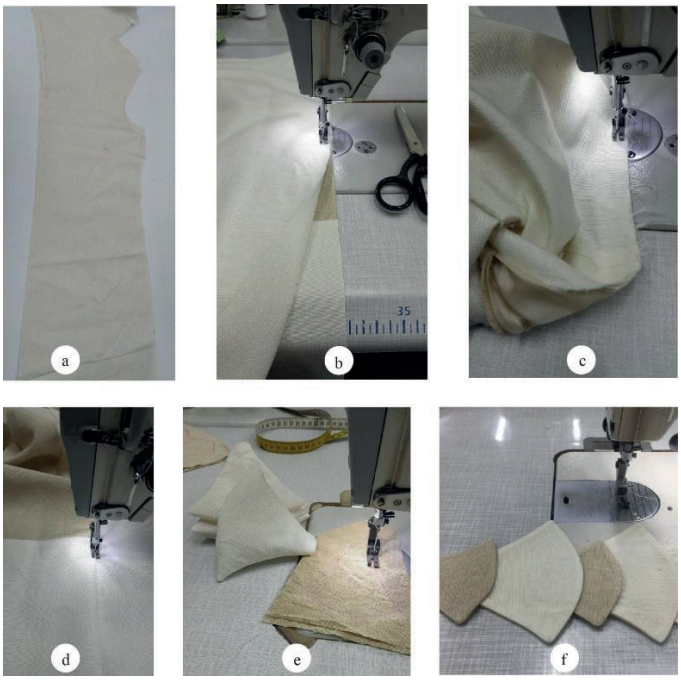

Image 17. Garment application process; cutting the garment, sewing front and back body pieces (a, b, c, d), belt sewing processes (e and f)

Image 18. Design visual for the Buldan bezi weaving

4.7. Ehram Weaving

In terms of design features, Erzurum ehram has a characteristic weaving structure defined by scatter patterns applied on its surface and edge borders. The scatter patterning concept adds movement to the surface without disturbing the plain surface construction of the weaving; border arrangements provide visual balance by limiting the composition. The limited and controlled use of patterns in a way that does not suppress the general form of the weaving allows ehram to be a clothing element that is both suitable for daily use and carries aesthetic value. This approach overlaps with the traditional production understanding where functionality is at the forefront.

The technical and design features of Erzurum ehram weaving are directly related to the harsh climate conditions of the region, the need for clothing that does not restrict movement, and local life practices. In this context, ehram is evaluated not only as a means of covering but as a traditional weaving example where function, aesthetic order, and cultural meaning are integrated.

4.7.1. The process of transforming textiles into clothing

Image 19. Artistic and graphic drawing regarding the weaving

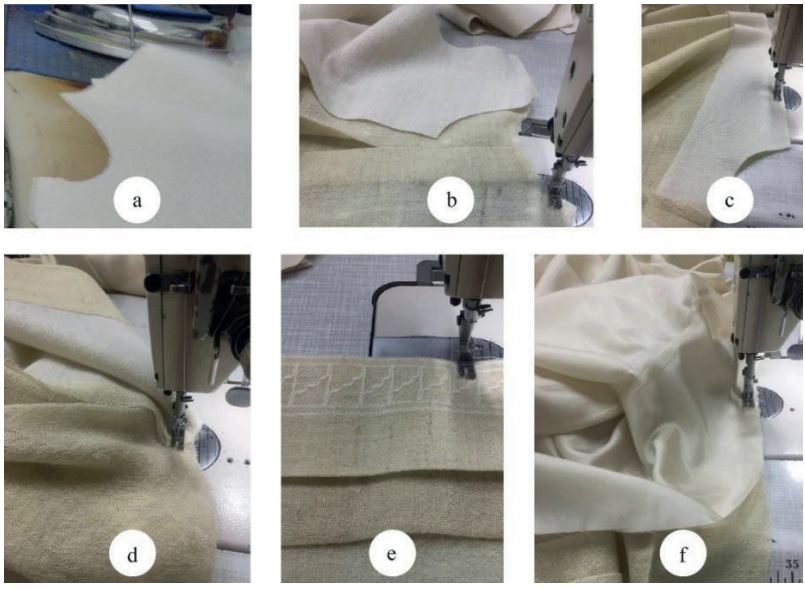

Image 20. Garment application process; Interfacing (a), sewing front and back body pieces (b, c, d), model applications on the sleeve and lining processes (e and f)

Image 21. Design visual for the Ehram weaving

5. Conclusion

The literature reviews carried out within the scope of this study have revealed that traditional hand-woven fabrics produced in different geographical regions of Türkiye show distinct regional differences in terms of technique, material, motif, and usage contexts. The examined weavings were evaluated not only as a result of local production practices, but as cultural products directly related to the climate conditions, lifestyles, socio-cultural values, and economic opportunities of the region they are in.

The data obtained during the research process show that traditional hand-woven fabrics in many regions have moved away from their original areas of use today and are mainly directed towards home textile products. This situation indicates that the sustainability of traditional weavings should be supported by new design areas beyond current usage habits. In this context, the study reveals that rethinking traditional hand-woven fabrics through garment design allows the aesthetic, functional, and cultural values of said weavings to be made visible within current design practices.

Their natural fiber-dominant structures, production characteristics with high environmental sensitivity, and unique surface characters make traditional

weavings a qualified material source for contemporary garment design. As a result, handling the traditional hand-woven fabrics sampled from the seven geographical regions of Türkiye with a holistic approach in the context of garment design both provides a comparative perspective to the studies mostly carried out on regional or single samples in the literature and proposes an alternative design model supporting the cultural transfer of traditional weavings. In this respect, the study emphasizes that traditional hand-woven fabrics should be evaluated not only as cultural heritage elements to be protected but as living production areas that can be actively included in current design processes.

Acknowledgment

This study was conducted within the scope of the project entitled “The Process of Transforming Traditional Weavings Sampled from the Geographical Regions of Türkiye into Garments” (Project Code: SSY-2021-10204), carried out under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Safiye SARI and financially supported by the Atatürk University Scientific Research Projects (BAP) Unit. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Atatürk University Scientific Research Projects Unit for the financial support provided in the collection of research data and the implementation of the applied studies.

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CHAPTER 2

SCULPTURAL ACCESSORIES UTILIZING HISTORICAL INSPIRATIONS[1]

Safiye SARİ[2]

Ahad SHAHHOSEINI[3]

Sajjad PAKZAD[4]

Deniz ERAY (Sanaz POURNADERI)[5]

1. Introduction

Turkish weaving art is a deeply rooted art tradition that was shaped in the Central Asian steppe culture and spread across a wide geography through migrations, trade routes, and historical encounters. In Turkish culture, weaving has been evaluated not only as a functional requirement of daily life but also as a vehicle for the transfer of cultural identity, aesthetic understanding, and

1 This study was produced from the results of the participatory research project titled "Sculptural Accessories Inspired by Historical Inspirations", coded SKP-2021-10116, conducted by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Safiye SARI and supported by the Atatürk University Scientific Research Projects Coordination Unit (BAP).

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symbolic thought. In this context, motifs are the fundamental narrative elements that make social memory and cultural codes visible on weaving surfaces.

Animal figures, especially bird depictions, were used extensively in carpets and flat weavings in early period Turkish communities. Although figurative narratives occasionally turned towards abstract and floral decorations under the influence of the Islamic aesthetic understanding during the Seljuk and Ottoman periods, the bird motif continued its existence by changing form. This continuity shows that the bird motif is a culturally adaptable element in terms of both symbolic and formal aspects in the Turkish–Iranian geography.

This study aims to transform the common cultural symbols and codes found in the traditional weavings of Erzurum and Tabriz into sculptural accessory designs through examination. The research is based on the assumption that the two-dimensional narratives of motifs found in the cultural history of Erzurum and Tabriz on weaving surfaces can be transferred to a three-dimensional design language specifically through accessories such as shoes, boots, slippers, and high boots possessing sculptural qualities. In this direction, the accessory has been handled not merely as a complementary element but as an independent art object carrying the historical and cultural narrative.

A qualitative research approach was adopted in the study; descriptive analyses were carried out through literature review, museum collections, and visual sources. The theoretical and visual data obtained were supported by research conducted in Erzurum and Tabriz; the formal characteristics, usage contexts, and symbolic meanings of the motifs found in traditional weavings were evaluated. The designs developed in line with these data were transformed into sculptural accessories under the theme of "Erzurum-Tabriz" within the scope of applied and experimental workshop studies.

The object of inquiry of the research consists of the figured motif/motifs common in the cultures of Erzurum and Tabriz within the context of the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage and intercultural permeability. While the universe of the study covers the historical and artistic interaction areas between the two cultures; the sample is limited to the transfer of symbolic motifs originating from this interaction to contemporary production objects through design. In this study where art is used as a tool, an artwork-centered approach was adopted; shoe, boot, slipper, and high boot accessory designs were handled as art objects that can represent cultural integrity and possess sculptural expression potential..

2. Relationship between History and Culture

Culture is one of the fundamental elements ensuring the continuity of societies. Culture is a multi-layered structure that includes not only daily life practices but also the historical experiences, collective memory, and symbolic production forms of a society. In this context, culture gains existence through the transformation and transfer of inherited values, meaning systems, and production practices from generation to generation over time (Yıldırım, 1998: 38). The relationship between history and culture can be read through the shaping of culture within the historical process and the making of historical experiences visible through cultural forms.

The lifestyles that societies have developed over centuries, along with their material and spiritual productions, constitute the cultural memory; this memory gains continuity through oral, written, and especially symbolic narratives (Göçer, 2012: 50). Symbols, motifs, and traditional production forms are among the most concrete carriers of this continuity. The symbolic dimension of culture is directly related to the belief systems, lifestyles, and aesthetic perceptions of societies. This dimension allows the meaning world, shaped within the historical process, to be visualized through symbols and motifs. Therefore, the analysis of cultural forms requires not only an aesthetic reading but also the analysis of historical and social memory. In this framework, cultural heritage is handled as the whole of tangible and intangible values that establish a bond between the past and present of societies (UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN, 2013).

Traditional weavings are cultural heritage elements that carry the quality of a document of historical experiences through both production techniques and the motifs found on them. The decorations and motifs on the weaving surface are evaluated as important indicators reflecting the cultural identity, aesthetic understanding, and symbolic codes of the society they belong to (Oktay et al., 2020: 306). In Turkish culture, weaving has been one of the primary tools of both daily life and cultural representation in the historical process extending from Central Asia to Anatolia. The interaction that Anatolia established with different civilizations ensured the enrichment of weaving techniques and the motif repertoire; this situation was decisive in the regional weaving traditions gaining identity. Ehram and Karnavas cloth weavings specific to the Erzurum region are among the concrete examples of this historical accumulation. Motifs used in Erzurum weavings are evaluated as visual narratives of social memory, cultural identity, and historical continuity (Üçer, 2019: 80).

Weaving types such as Bardız rug, ehram, Karnavas cloth, cicim, and tablet weaving (çarpana) are important elements transferring the cultural memory of the region to the present day through both production techniques and the motifs they carry. Especially in Bardız rugs, the tree of life, ram's horn, floral, and animal motifs draw attention with their historical and symbolic meaning layers (Image 1).

Image 1. Erzurum Bardız rug design/motif structure (Erzurum Maturation Institute Archive, 2020)

In Erzurum cicim weavings produced with the plain weave technique, the composition is mostly constructed through repeating motifs carrying symbolic meanings. While burr (pıtrak), hands on hips (eli belinde), hook (çengel), and scorpion (akrep) motifs are frequently used in cicims; scattered patterns and edge borders come to the fore in Erzurum ehram weavings, where the warp and weft are prepared from sheep's wool. The understanding of decoration in ehram weaving is based on the principle of placing symbolic, geometric, floral, and figured decorations into the composition within a certain order (Başaran, 2014: 158). This arrangement is not only an aesthetic choice but also related to the usage purpose, social context, and cultural memory of the weaving. Motifs on ehram surfaces often appear as scattered arrangements spread throughout the entire weaving or as repetitions defining edge borders.

The motif repertoire used in Erzurum ehram weavings is quite rich. Within this repertoire, alongside floral and symbolic motifs such as walnut leaf, basil branch, honeysuckle, double rice, antique, macaroni, movement of the star, lentil, lady's navel, rice grain, apple basket, forelock comb, diamond earring, bee sat on the branch, and gazelle horn; figured and symbolic motifs such as winged and wingless flying bird, tied and untied necktie are also included (Elibol and Sari, 2021: 15). These motifs are evaluated in Erzurum weavings

not only as decorative elements but also as visual codes reflecting social memory, the relationship established with nature, and belief-based symbolic narratives (Image 2–3).

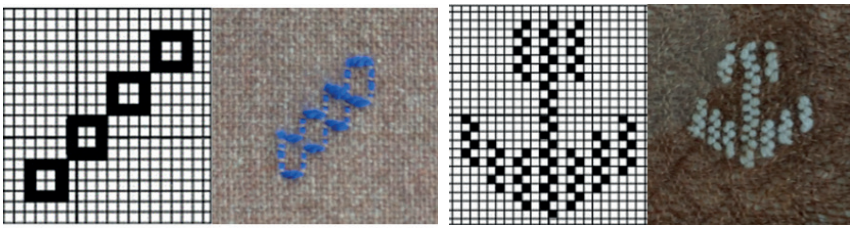

Image 2. Erzurum Ehram weaving "makarna" motif and "merdin küpesi" motif (Elibol and Sari, 2021: 16)

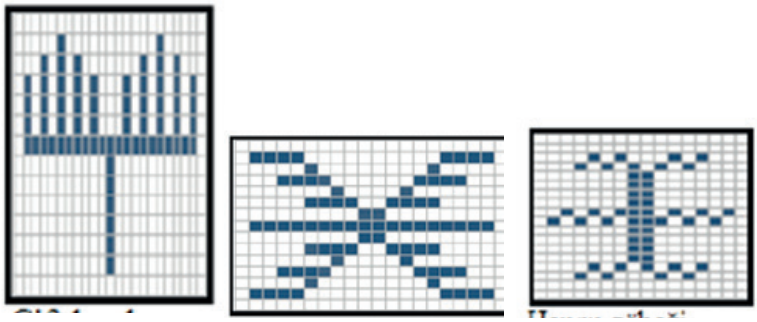

Image 3. Motifs used in Erzurum Ehram weaving – "çift kanat", "beli bağlı boyun bağı", "hanım göbeği" motifs (Başaran, 2014: 181).

Karnavas cloth, which was registered with a geographical indication in 2021, has an important place among the traditional weavings specific to Erzurum. This registration is evaluated as an element that protects not only the regional production quality but also the unique motif repertoire and cultural identity of the weaving. The motifs used in Karnavas cloth consist predominantly of symbolic and nature-based visual codes. Alongside floral and symbolic motifs such as burr, bride's rose, fork flower, double cluster, nine reed branch, cherry, four money flower, and tree of life; figurative motifs such as scorpion and butterfly are also included. Additionally, star, snowflake, amulet, hook, owl's foot, and eye motifs are used on the weaving surface as geometric and protective symbols completing the composition (Image 4).

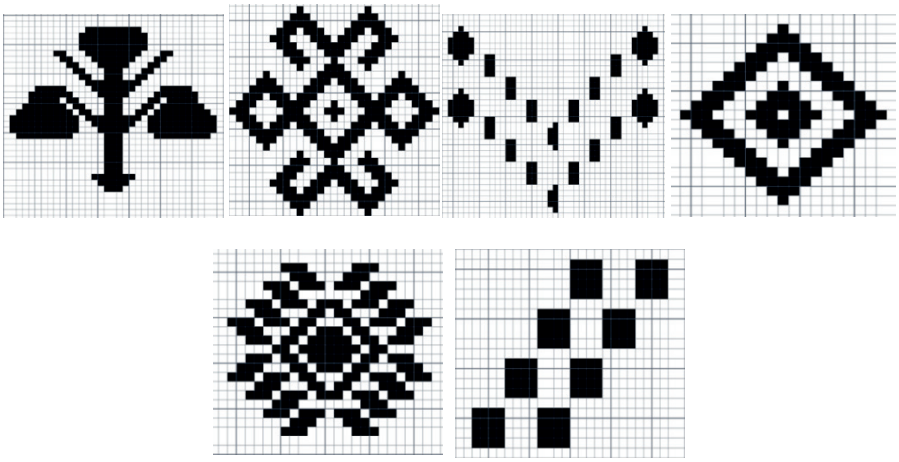

Image 4. Motifs used in Erzurum Karnavas cloth weaving (Hayat ağacı, akrep, elti eltiye küstü, göz, pıtrak, Meryem ana motifs) (Sari and Bakiş, 2025: 265-270). (Sari ve Bakiş, 2025: 265-270).

These motifs in Karnavas cloth reflect not only an aesthetic decoration understanding but also cultural meaning layers such as abundance, protection, continuity, and the relationship established with nature. In this respect, Karnavas cloth is evaluated as an important cultural heritage item carrying the symbolic narrative power of the Erzurum weaving tradition. The motifs that reached the present day by preserving the cultural richness of the region through the historical process appeared on weaving surfaces as symbolic narrative tools reflecting the tradition, custom, and lifestyle of the Erzurum culture. These motifs used in traditional weavings produced especially by women in and around Erzurum; sometimes represented the relationship established with nature, and sometimes the family structure, fertility, and belief systems. Some of the motifs, on the other hand, derived directly from symbolic forms depending on the need for communication and developed as a visual language making meaning transfer possible between individuals and communities.

In the formation of this symbolic language, not only local cultural dynamics but also interactions established with different geographies in the historical process were decisive. Indeed, the Mongol ruler Abaka making Tabriz the capital and administrative center of the Near East Empire in 1265 laid the ground for the city to show great development in cultural and commercial terms. During this period, Tabriz became an important vehicle for not only commercial but also artistic and cultural interaction between East and West. Although this central role weakened with the end of the Ilkhanids' political

presence in Anatolia, the city continued to be one of the effective actors of regional cultural circulation for a long time (Jhan, 1980: 59–68).

Today, Tabriz, located in the northwest of the Islamic Republic of Iran, is one of the most important cultural centers of the region called Iranian Azerbaijan. Having gained worldwide fame especially in the field of carpet weaving throughout the historical process, the city transformed the carpet weaving art from a nomadic and rural production form into a palace and workshop-based art practice in the 16th century. Known for its silk carpets called Hatayi, Tabriz also prepared the ground for the development of the Tabriz Miniature School; this art circle, to which Bihzad was also affiliated, became the representative of an important aesthetic transformation in the 16th century (Aydoğmuşoğlu, 2007: 8–10) (Image 5).

Image 5. A detail from mosque tiles with Hatayi motifs (Rüstem Paşa Mosque, 16th century) (Karaca, 2021: 7087).

In 16th and 17th-century Iranian carpets, the motif repertoire was shaped around geometric decorations, stylized palmettes, and cloud forms of Chinese origin. These motifs should be evaluated not only as an aesthetic choice but as visual codes reflecting the concepts of cosmological order, continuity, and harmony with nature of the Safavid period art understanding. Especially the Chinese cloud motif is a concrete indicator of the cultural and commercial interaction established with East Asia in Iranian weavings. Iranian carpets, in terms of production understanding based on manual labor, symbolic motif language, and surface integrity, created a distinct effect on the aesthetic approach of the Arts and Crafts Movement that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Designers operating in England during this period adapted the motif arrangements, understanding of repetition, and surface rhythm seen in Safavid period carpets to their own textile and decorative art productions. This situation shows that traditional Iranian carpet art is not just a local craft product but an international source of reference feeding modern design thought.

Technically evaluated, the "Senneh (Iranian) knot" widely used in Iranian carpets offers a structure allowing motifs to be applied with finer details and high resolution. In this respect, the Senneh knot emerged as one of the most important alternatives to the symmetrical Turkish (Ghiordes) knot used in the Ottoman geography; it gained acceptance not only regionally but on a universal scale over time. This difference in the knot technique directly affected the formal character of the motifs and the surface composition, playing a decisive role in the formation of the unique aesthetic identity of Iranian carpets (Subaşı Adıbelli, 2025: 141–143) (Image 6).

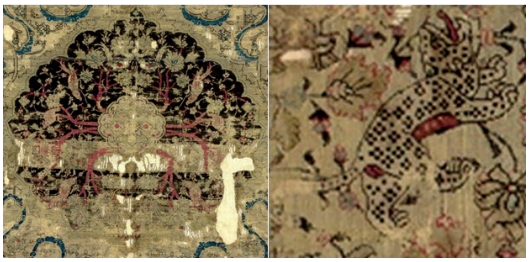

Image 6. Silk Carpet Example - Iran National Museum 16th century, Tabriz\ Inventory no: 3304 (Subaşı Adıbelli, 2025: 145).

In the examined Tabriz carpets, a multi-layered decoration understanding in which animal, floral, and symbolic motifs are used together draws attention. In this context, the leopard (pars) figure stands out as an animal motif representing the meanings of strength, power, and protection by being associated with lion symbolism in the Turkish–Iranian art tradition. The leopard motif is not only an aesthetic element but was also positioned on the weaving surface as a visual equivalent of the concepts of power, sovereignty, and social strength. Among the symbolic motifs, the cloud motif is a common decoration element used widely in both the Iranian weaving tradition and Anatolian traditional weavings. The cloud motif, as a symbol showing continuity in the context of intercultural interaction, is associated with the concepts of movement, transition, holiness, and celestial order. In this respect, the motif carries the quality of an important common visual code establishing a symbolic bond between Erzurum and Tabriz weavings. Leaf motifs evaluated within floral decorations represent the relationship established with nature, the thought of renewal, and continuity. Floral motifs used together with animal and symbolic motifs in Tabriz carpets are present as complementary elements supporting the composition integrity and creating a balanced aesthetic structure on the surface (Image 7).

Image 7. Tabriz silk carpet example - Tehran National Museum 16th century, Tabriz\ Inventory no: 3306 (Subaşı Adıbelli, 2025: 145).

The Safavid period Tabriz silk carpet, dated to the 16th century and located in the Tehran National Museum collection, reflects the motif understanding of the period within a multi-layered composition. The combined use of floral decorations and animal figures on the carpet surface shows that the concepts of nature, power, and holiness were handled with a holistic aesthetic understanding in Safavid art. While small-scale flower motifs create a rhythmic texture on the surface; swan and bird figures are associated with themes of movement, elegance, and spiritual ascent. The Islamic writing elements accompanying the composition reveal that the carpet is not only a decorative object Ama also carries a symbolic and intellectual narrative. Tabriz rugs (kilims) of the same period offer important examples allowing the motif tradition to be observed with a simpler and more direct narrative. The use of geometric forms alongside floral decorations on the rug surfaces shows that the motifs simplified formally according to different technical and usage contexts. This situation reveals that in the Tabriz weaving tradition, the motif language shows continuity not only in high-status productions such as carpets but also in weavings for daily use (Image 8).

Image 8. Tabriz rug weaving example - Iran National Museum 16th century, Isfahan\ Inventory no: 3675 (Subaşı Adıbelli, 2025: 154).

Another decoration element standing out in Safavid period weaving art is the leaf motif. This motif appears in the aesthetic understanding of the period as an important indicator of the symbolic relationship established with nature. The leaf motif represents the concepts of continuity, vitality, and cyclicality in compositions by being used with floral decorations; it functions as a rhythmic element strengthening surface movement, especially in silk carpets and weavings. The frequent repetition of the leaf motif in the Safavid weaving tradition reveals that the decoration language referencing nature is not only a decorative choice but also an intellectual and cultural narrative tool (Image 9).

Image 9. Tabriz silk carpet - Iran National Museum 16th century, Tabriz\ Inventory no: 3394, (Subaşı Adıbelli, 2025: 150).

3. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Cultural elements emerging in any geography of the Turkic world do not remain only within local borders as they are adopted and embraced over time; they can spread to a wide geography through cultural interactions. This diffusion process ensures that customs, traditions, and conventions fed by common historical memory, language, and life practices develop in similar ways. This emerging common cultural structure expresses a values system strengthened through belief systems, production and consumption forms, art understanding, and the culture of living together. Culture is a dynamic structure containing the tangible and intangible reflections of the relationship societies establish with the geography they live in and gains continuity by being transferred from generation to generation. In this transfer process, traditional production forms and handicrafts, in particular, play an important role in the protection and reproduction of cultural memory.

The historical background of Erzurum, one of the oldest settlement centers in Anatolia, based on archaeological findings, dates back to 4000 BC. Excavations carried out in Karaz, Pulur, and Güzelova mounds show that the region has been in the interaction area of different civilizations since prehistoric

times. Following many civilizations such as Urartians, Medes, Persians, and Macedonians, Erzurum permanently acquired a Turkish-Islamic identity with the settlement of Seljuks in Anatolia in the 11th century and became a strategic center in the process of Turkification and Islamization of Anatolia (Kaya, 2014: 59). Erzurum's location on important trade routes ensured the city was not only a military and political but also a cultural transition point (Zaman, Sevindi, and Birinci, 2018). Similarly, Tabriz, located on the historical Silk Road, undertook a cultural and commercial intermediary role between Asia and Europe; it became an important center standing out especially with handicrafts and weaving tradition (Kobatarian, 2013). The Tabriz region, also known as Iranian Azerbaijan, was shaped under an intense Turkish cultural influence throughout history; it formed a strong accumulation in carpet and rug weaving (Aydoğmuşoğlu, 2007: 4–10). The geographical proximity of Erzurum and Tabriz, historical trade networks, and common cultural origins laid the ground for the development of similar motif, symbol, and composition understandings in the traditional textiles of both regions. In this context, motifs should be evaluated not only as decorative elements but as cultural codes representing the belief systems of societies, the relationship they establish with nature, and the social structure.

Literature reviews show that theoretical or applied studies in which these cultural codes in Erzurum and Tabriz traditional weavings are handled with a common perspective are limited. This situation strengthens the originality and scientific contribution potential of the study. The reinterpretation of cultural elements in the field of art and design is an effective method ensuring the sustainability of culture in the current context. Accessories stand out as strong indicators of individual identity and cultural belonging through the symbolic meanings they carry (Sari, 2021: 283). In this study, common motifs and symbolic elements in Erzurum and Tabriz traditional textiles were analyzed in line with the theoretical framework and transformed into sculptural accessory designs specifically for shoes. Thus, cultural heritage was reproduced through contemporary design language and transformed into a concrete art object.

4. Method

A qualitative research approach was adopted in this study; an applied, experimental, and art-workshop based research design was used. The research was conducted within the framework of the practice-based research model in which cultural data are interpreted through the artistic production process and transformed into a concrete design output. During the research process, common cultural heritage elements based on the historical, cultural, and geographical proximities of the cities of Erzurum and Tabriz were examined;

as a result of this examination, common motifs and symbolic elements present in both cultures were identified.

The sculptural accessory collection themed “Erzurum and Tabriz” was formed in line with theoretical information obtained from the literature review and visual sources. The conceptual infrastructure of the collection was formed by the traditional motif understanding fed from the common Turkish culture of said cities and the thought of reinterpreting these motifs with a contemporary design language. The object of inquiry of the research consists of the common motif tradition in Erzurum and Tabriz traditional weavings within the context of the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage and intercultural interaction. Motifs were handled as cultural codes; they were analyzed in terms of symbolic, formal, and aesthetic characteristics.

The study was carried out in two stages. In the first stage, a literature review was conducted on Erzurum and Tabriz culture, traditional weavings, motifs, and symbolic narratives in order to form the scientific and theoretical framework of the research. In the second stage, the design process was initiated based on the identified motifs; the process of abstraction, formal transformation, and reinterpretation of the motifs with a contemporary design understanding was carried out. At this stage, first the two-dimensional sketches and technical drawings of the sculptural accessories were prepared, then the three-dimensional design and application process was realized. Design and application stages were evaluated in line with material, form, scale, and aesthetic balance criteria and the final collection was put forward.

5. Findings

The workshop-application studies carried out within the scope of the research were conducted in two stages and each stage produced different types of findings. These findings provide formal and conceptual data demonstrating the transferability of common motifs belonging to Erzurum and Tabriz cultures to contemporary accessory design.

5.1. Workshop-Applied Studies Conducted in Erzurum: Two-Dimensional Design Process Findings

In the first stage workshop studies conducted in Erzurum, traditional weaving motifs identified as a result of the research were transferred to the two-dimensional design process. In this process, motifs were reinterpreted using methods of simplification, abstraction, and stylization instead of being copied directly. Especially for the purpose of making the figured and floral

motifs in traditional weavings suitable for accessory design, form, line, and surface relationships were brought to the fore.

The sketches and technical drawings obtained during the two-dimensional design process were evaluated in terms of the scalability of the motifs, rhythmic repetitions on the surface, and aesthetic balance. The most important finding obtained at this stage is that traditional motifs are adaptable to contemporary design language without losing their essential character (Image 10, 11, 12, 13).

1. Slipper group designs

Image 10. Slipper group designs (Author archive, 2023).

2- Flat shoe designs

Image 11. Flat shoe group designs (Author archive, 2023).

3- High-heeled shoe group designs

Image 12. High-heeled shoe group designs (Author archive, 2023).

4- Boot group designs

Image 13. Boot group designs (Author archive, 2023).

5.2. Workshop-Applied Studies Conducted in Tabriz: Three-Dimensional Design and Application Process Findings

In the second stage of the research, the two-dimensional designs developed in Erzurum were transferred to the three-dimensional design and production process in Tabriz. At this stage, motifs were handled anew by considering volume, depth, and material relationship in line with the sculptural accessory understanding. The applications carried out using local production techniques and natural materials revealed that motifs can function not only as a visual element but also as a structural design item.

Findings obtained during the three-dimensional application process show that motifs common in Erzurum and Tabriz cultures can diversify through different production techniques and materials and make intercultural interaction visible. The positioning of motifs on the form, the relationship they established with surface texture, and usage ergonomics emerged as elements supporting the functional and aesthetic integrity of the design (Image 14, 15, 16, 17).

1- Slipper group designs

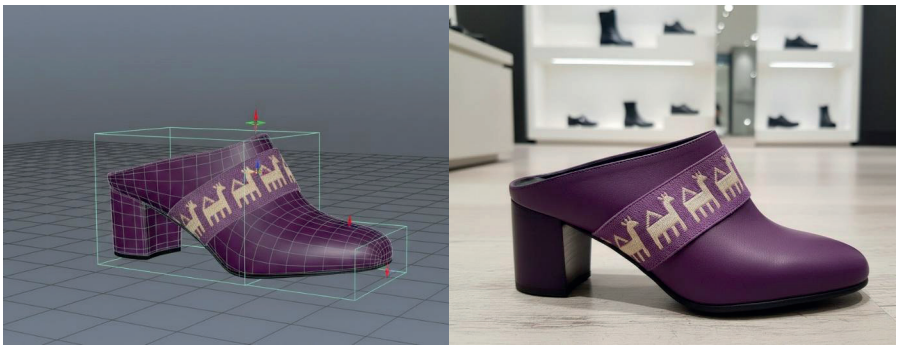

Image 14. Slipper group designs (Author archive, 2023).

2- Shoe group designs

Image 15. Shoe group designs (Author archive, 2023).

3- Boot group designs

Image 16. Boot group designs (Author archive, 2023)

4- High boot group designs

Image 17. High boot group designs (Author archive, 2023)

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to demonstrate the transformability of motifs found in Erzurum and Tabriz traditional weavings, which constitute the common heritage of Turkish culture, into sculptural accessory designs with a contemporary design approach. The readability of these two cultures, which have strong

historical, cultural, and artistic bonds, through common symbolic codes formed the fundamental starting point of the research.

The literature review and field studies conducted within the scope of the research revealed that motifs in Erzurum and Tabriz weavings are not only aesthetic decoration elements but also symbolic indicators reflecting social memory, belief systems, and cultural identity. The persistence of these motifs in different geographies and within different production traditions concretely demonstrates the continuity of Turkish culture and intercultural permeability.

Findings obtained as a result of applied workshop studies showed that traditional weaving motifs can be successfully transferred to contemporary accessory design not through direct copying but through methods of abstraction, stylization, and formal reinterpretation. While the two-dimensional design process conducted in Erzurum allowed for the reconfiguration of form, line, and surface relationships of the motifs; the three-dimensional design and production process realized in Tabriz revealed that these motifs can turn into volumetric and structural design elements.

Sculptural accessory designs developed as a result of the study show that the common motif tradition in Erzurum and Tabriz cultures can be reproduced with contemporary design language and in this way, a contribution to the sustainability of intangible cultural heritage can be provided. Reinterpreting motifs with different materials and production techniques revealed that cultural heritage is not a static element but a living and transformable value. In this respect, the study offers both a theoretical and applied contribution in terms of documenting, protecting, and including traditional weaving motifs in current production practices through design. It is thought that this approach developed through the example of Erzurum and Tabriz will also form a reference for future studies aimed at transferring common cultural heritage elements in different geographies to contemporary design fields.

Contribution and Acknowledgment

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CHAPTER 3

LETTERING, CALLIGRAPHY, AND TYPOGRAPHY IN GRAPHIC DESIGN: CONCEPTUAL DISTINCTIONS AND TERMINOLOGICAL CONFUSION

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INTRODUCTION

In the discipline of graphic design, writing is not merely a carrier of language; it is also a visual system that generates form, rhythm, and meaning. For this reason, different modes of textual production—manual production, tool-assisted production, and digital production—give rise to distinct conceptual frameworks: calligraphy, typography, and lettering. However, particularly in practical applications, these concepts are frequently used interchangeably, which weakens the clarity of both theoretical discourse and design decision-making processes. This study aims to clarify the boundaries between these concepts by examining them through historical and functional criteria.

The emergence of letters is a result of humanity's desire to elevate communication beyond basic verbal interaction. Early human communities

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that initially relied on simple vocal sounds gradually began to enhance their communicative capabilities by using objects found in their environment. Early examples of this development include tying knots in rope-like materials to indicate numbers or carving marks onto hard surfaces such as stone.

Following this stage, humans began to establish more complex forms of communication by drawing images on cave walls to convey emotions, thoughts, and experiences to other members of their communities. Similar to the evolution of spoken language, the development of written communication has been strongly influenced by humanity's inherent tendency toward storytelling.

The earliest examples of letters and alphabets in the modern sense are known to have been developed by the Sumerians around 3200 BCE. Like many other civilizations, the Sumerians initially relied on pictorial representations to meet their need for written communication. Over time, they began producing clay tablets that combined straight lines with object-based imagery. Gradually, these pictorial representations were replaced by wedge- and nail-like linear marks, a process that culminated in the emergence of cuneiform writing, which is considered the earliest known writing system in human history. In the first section of this study, the origins of writing and the civilizations responsible for its development are examined in order to trace the evolution of written communication. This historical progression led writing to develop along two distinct trajectories: a functional, reproducible path and an aesthetic, hand-crafted path. These parallel developments have ultimately necessitated the contemporary distinction between typography, calligraphy, and lettering.

Ahmet Seyrek explains the Sumerians' contribution to the invention of writing as follows: "…The Sumerians developed the earliest examples of written communication on clay tablets and gradually simplified and symbolized this writing system, giving rise to cuneiform. This system is regarded as a major revolution in both linguistic and communicative terms in human history…" (Seyrek, 2018, p. 45).

Another civilization that significantly contributed to the development of writing is ancient Egypt. Valuing aesthetic expression, the Egyptians represented groups of words using specific shapes and symbols arranged vertically or horizontally. The exact date of the emergence of this writing system, known as hieroglyphics, remains uncertain. However, papyri believed to have been produced during the Fifth Dynasty of Egypt around 2500 BCE are considered to contain some of the earliest examples of calligraphy. The second section of this study focuses on the concept of calligraphy by examining the Egyptian civilization and other cultures in which this practice developed. As

Smith (2004, p. 103) states, "…In Egypt, calligraphy was not regarded merely as a writing practice, but as a form of aesthetic and cultural expression…"

Typography, one of the most frequently used terms in contemporary design practice, can be traced back to the Roman civilization. The Trajan Column, dated approximately to 122 CE, is regarded as one of the earliest typographic examples due to features such as letter alignment, spacing ratios, and the clear distinction between letters and numerals. In addition to Roman contributions, the Carolingian minuscule script, associated with the Frankish civilization, is considered a foundational example because of its systematic development process and its role as a precursor to what is now known as Gothic type. The third section of this study examines typography from its early examples in Roman and Frankish cultures to its contemporary applications.

Throughout history, the widespread adoption of written communication has facilitated the development of both typography and calligraphy. The concept of lettering, however, has remained comparatively underrepresented, both because it was introduced into academic literature later than the other concepts and because its precise historical origins are difficult to determine. Characterized by its visually appealing structure, lettering primarily focuses on the extensions, textures, and expressive qualities of letterforms. In lettering practice, readability is not always the primary objective; instead, illustrative methods may be employed to convey the emotional or conceptual essence of a word or name. Lettering produced through such illustrative approaches is often regarded not merely as writing, but as a form of drawing or visual art. The final section of this study highlights the concept of lettering by examining both intentional and unintentional examples produced throughout history.

In this article, the theoretical framework is constructed through conceptual analysis and historical discussion based on criteria such as production tools, reproducibility, and communicative intent, which form the basis of the distinction between lettering, calligraphy, and typography. By combining literature review with descriptive and comparative evaluation methods, the study examines the historical development processes, production techniques, and usage contexts of these fields, and proposes a set of criteria aimed at establishing a clearer and more consistent terminological distinction among them.

1.THE ORIGINS OF WRITING

The emergence of writing arose from needs that extended beyond oral communication. The growth of human communities and the increasing complexity of socio-economic relationships required more sophisticated

systems of information transfer. As Robins (1997, p. 42) notes, "…Throughout history, writing has been the most fundamental communication tool shaping social organization, preserving cultural heritage, and transmitting knowledge to future generations…"

It is widely believed that writing emerged in the early stages of human civilization, particularly within the first settled societies, as a response to the need for record-keeping. The earliest written documents are thought to have consisted of inventory lists documenting livestock and food supplies owned by temples or individuals. Civilizations that employed primitive writing systems did not view writing solely as a recording tool, but also as a means of maintaining authority and power. Parallel investments in the development of writing enabled rulers to manage administrative processes more effectively and contributed to the consolidation of centralized political structures.

Beyond basic communication and record-keeping functions, the expansion of trade networks among different civilizations played a crucial role in the development of writing. As Smith (2010, p. 45) suggests, "…Writing can be historically associated with the development of trade, as well as with broader social and cultural advancements. In ancient societies, writing is believed to have been used to regulate commercial transactions and to track debt relationships…"

Before the emergence of alphabetic systems familiar today, writing appeared in various forms. Early stages were dominated by pictograms used to describe objects or concepts, followed by ideograms—graphic symbols created to represent specific ideas. As communication between societies expanded and symbolic systems became insufficient, cuneiform writing developed by the Sumerians marked a major milestone in the evolution of written communication.

1.1. Pictographic Writing

Pictograms are symbolic signs developed to convey specific meanings in the history of human communication. These simplified visual representations of objects or actions constitute the foundational stage of written language and subsequently of phonetic systems and abstract conceptual expression.

The earliest pictograms emerged through the imitation of environmental elements. These imitated forms typically represented animals, plants, objects, or natural events encountered by early societies. Settled civilizations such as the Sumerians and Egyptians adopted and refined these symbols for administrative and religious purposes. While the Sumerians initially relied on pictographic systems, they later advanced toward cuneiform writing, which incorporated

abstract meanings and phonetic structures. As Gelb (1963, p. 23) explains, "…Initially, these symbols consisted of simple drawings representing specific objects or actions. Over time, however, they evolved to express abstract meanings and the phonetic structure of language…"

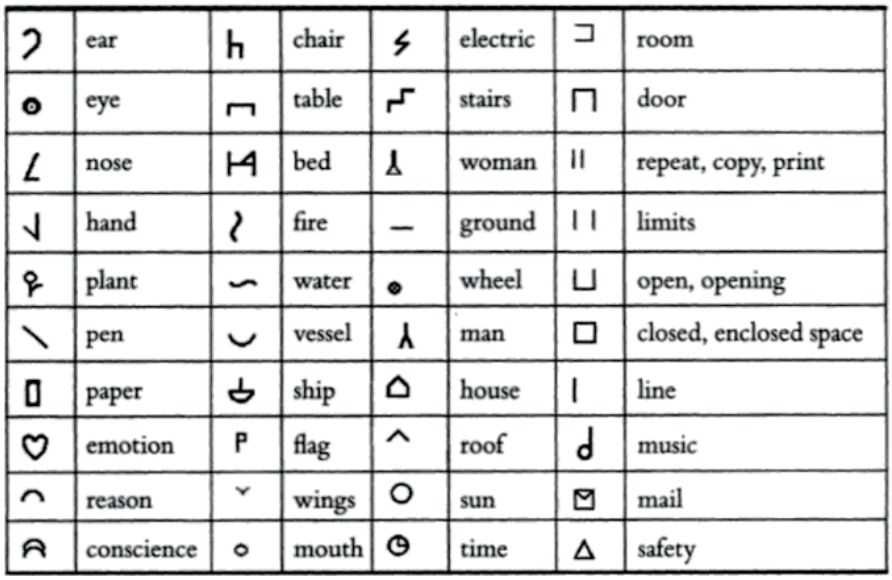
Figure 1. Example of Luwian Script
*(*http://tr.wikipedia-on-ipfs.org/wiki/Luvi_dili.html*) – (Accessed: January 5, 2025)*

Through interactions among different cultures, these universally comprehensible symbols became an important tool for communication (see Figure 1). As illustrated, commercial goods were recorded by drawing them onto clay tablets. As a universal means of communication, pictograms have been used as practical communication tools from the early stages of human history to the present day.

In the modern world, particularly in digital environments and visual media, universal symbols are widely employed to overcome language barriers. Examples include road signs, public service symbols, and emojis that are frequently used in everyday digital communication.

1.2. Ideogram

Unlike pictograms, ideograms are visual symbols that represent ideas or concepts rather than specific objects. The earliest examples are believed to have been produced in Mesopotamia around 3000 BCE. Ideograms emerged as the next stage in the development of written language due to the limitations of pictograms in conveying abstract meanings. They were used by human societies to symbolize words and conceptual expressions.



	ear		chair		electric		room
	eye		table		stairs		door
	nose		bed		woman		repeat, copy, print
	hand		fire		ground		limits
	plant		water		wheel		open, opening
	pen		vessel		man		closed, enclosed space
	paper		ship		house		line
	emotion		flag		roof		music
	reason		wings		sun		mail
	conscience		mouth		time		safety

Figure 2. Ideogram: Chinese Characters and the Myth of Disembodied Meaning (J. Marshall Unger)
(https://books.google.com.tr/books?id=fRqKreZFVTYC&printsec=frontcover&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false) – (Accessed: January 13, 2026)

Ideograms expanded the capacity of written communication to express abstract thoughts, concepts, and actions (see Figure 2). Meanings that remained limited within the visual representational scope of pictograms began to be articulated in a more generalized and abstract manner through ideograms. As Gelb (1963, p. 45) states, "…This development enabled ideograms to lay the foundations for a more comprehensive and intelligible written language…"

Ideograms continue to form the foundation of several contemporary Asian writing systems. In languages such as Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, they constitute the basis of words that convey both concrete and abstract meanings.

For example, the word “mountain” not only refers to a tangible geographical feature but is also used metaphorically to signify concepts such as height and strength.

1.3. Cuneiform Writing

Cuneiform writing, developed by the Sumerians around 3000 BCE, was used throughout history to address the administrative, economic, and cultural needs of societies. The development of cuneiform represents an important cultural heritage that reflects the evolution of both language and writing. The origins of cuneiform can be traced back to pictographic writing systems developed during the fourth millennium BCE. Pictograms were initially regarded as simple visual representations of objects or actions. Over time, however, these symbols became increasingly abstract, expanding their semantic capacity and incorporating phonetic elements. The evolution of cuneiform emerged as a result of growing social demands and increasingly complex administrative structures. This writing system developed by the Sumerians was subsequently adopted by later civilizations and became widely used throughout the Mesopotamian region.

Figure 3. Babylonian Tablets from the Hammurabi Period (c. 1750 BCE) (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cuneiform) – (Accessed: January 5, 2025)

One of the most distinctive characteristics of cuneiform writing is its production on clay tablets. This writing system was created by inscribing soft clay surfaces, typically using a stylus shaped like a vertical wedge. The material structure of cuneiform influenced both the development of the script and its portability. The symbols used in cuneiform represent both phonetic elements and meaningful units such as syllables. Clay tablets facilitated the preservation of written records and enabled ancient texts to survive to the present day. The most prominent areas of cuneiform usage were the documentation of agricultural production and commercial transactions.

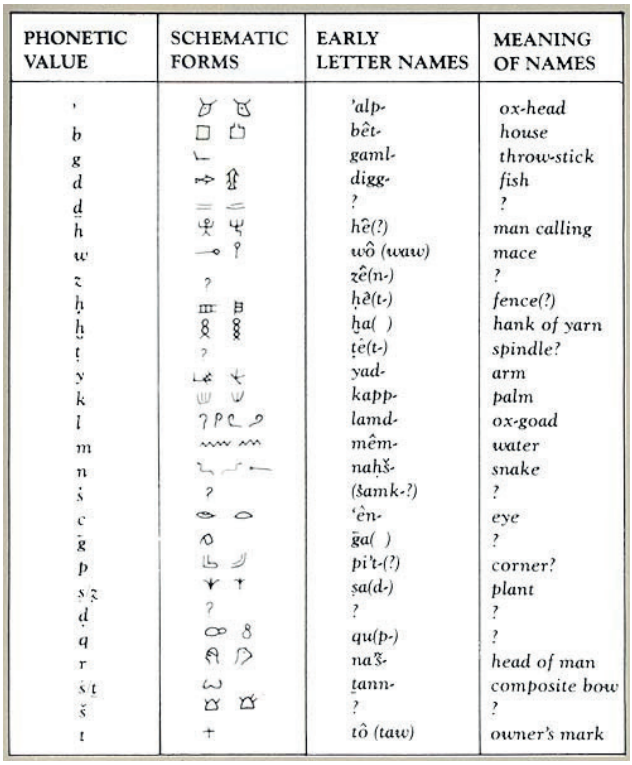
One of the major cultural impacts of cuneiform was the recording of texts related to deities and rulers. In Mesopotamia, cuneiform was widely used to document religious rituals and the achievements of kings. These texts became significant sources reflecting the religious beliefs, cultural values, and social structures of the period. This demonstrates that written language did not merely function as a means of information transfer, but also evolved into an instrument for reinforcing social organization and maintaining institutional continuity. Cuneiform also played a crucial role in education. Mastery of cuneiform was a prerequisite for belonging to the educated elite of the time. As Goody (1986, p. 112) states, "…This writing system enabled the ruling class and priests to access knowledge and simultaneously led to the emergence of an elite group responsible for preserving and transmitting information…"

Under the Babylonian Empire, cuneiform became more systematized and was used to produce a large number of texts. The Code of Hammurabi, written in Babylon, serves as a prominent example of the cultural and administrative significance of this writing system. The dissemination of cuneiform across other civilizations and its continued relevance in contemporary historical research demonstrate the profound importance of this script.

1.4. The Concept of the Alphabet

The history of the alphabet is rooted in the development of writing systems in early civilizations such as Mesopotamia and Egypt. Cuneiform writing developed by the Sumerians and the hieroglyphic system of ancient Egypt laid the foundations for the concept of the alphabet. Egypt developed a complex writing system that incorporated both ideograms and phonetic symbols. However, this system underwent a long evolutionary process before giving rise to alphabetic writing. As Gelb (1963, p. 78) notes, "…Hieroglyphic writing in Egypt was widely used, particularly in administrative and religious texts. Nevertheless, the development of the alphabet became possible only by moving beyond purely logographic writing systems…"

As one of the most significant inventions in human history, the alphabet enabled the systematic recording of language in written form and accelerated cultural and social development. The evolution of the alphabet played a critical role in the advancement of written communication, governance, commerce, and literature.



PHONETIC VALUE	EARLY LETTER NAMES	MEANING OF NAMES
'	*'alp-*	*ox-head*
b	*bêt-*	*house*
g	*gaml-*	*throw-stick*
d	*digg-*	*fish*
ḏ	*?*	*?*
h	*hê(?)*	*man calling*
w	*wô (waw)*	*mace*
z	*zê(n-)*	*?*
ḥ	*ḥè(t-)*	*fence(?)*
ḫ	*ḫa( )*	*hank of yarn*
ṭ	*ṭè(t-)*	*spindle?*
y	*yad-*	*arm*
k	*kapp-*	*palm*
l	*lamd-*	*ox-goad*
m	*mêm-*	*water*
n	*naḥš-*	*snake*
ś	*(šamk-?)*	*?*
ʿ	*ʿên-*	*eye*
ǧ	*ǧa( )*	*?*
p	*pi't-(?)*	*corner?*
ṣ ẓ	*ṣa(d-)*	*plant*
ḏ	*?*	*?*
q	*qu(p-)*	*?*
r	*naš-*	*head of man*
š ṯ	*ṯann-*	*composite bow*
š	*?*	*?*
t	*tô (taw)*	*owner's mark*

Figure 4. Proto-Canaanite Alphabet
(https://library.biblicalarchaeology.org/sidebar/earliest-alphabet-a-canaanite-invention-preserved-in-sinai-mines/?utm_) – (Accessed: January 13, 2026)

The Phoenicians are regarded as one of the first civilizations to fully develop the alphabet around the 18th century BCE. The foundation of this newly developed alphabet was the Proto-Canaanite script, which lacked a fixed systematic structure and was based on phonetic representation rather than written symbols (see Figure 4). As a mercantile society, the Phoenicians introduced one of the earliest alphabetic systems composed solely of consonants, which was considerably simpler to write than previous writing systems. As Lloyd (2000, p. 156) notes, "…The Phoenicians played an active role in the dissemination of this alphabet, particularly through maritime trade routes,

allowing it to spread rapidly to other cultures throughout the Mediterranean basin…"

The Greek civilization further developed this writing system by introducing vowels, thereby significantly enhancing the phonetic capacity of the alphabet. The addition of vowels played a crucial role in the advancement of phonetic writing systems and in the evolution of the alphabet itself.

The alphabet developed by the Greeks was later adopted by the Roman Empire and became the foundation of the modern Latin alphabet. The extensive territorial reach and political power of the Roman Empire facilitated the rapid dissemination of this alphabet. The widespread use of the Latin alphabet today and its role as the basis for many modern languages can be historically attributed to Roman influence. As Goody (1986, p. 134) states, "…The increased accessibility and efficiency of the alphabet facilitated access to knowledge and contributed to societal development. Moreover, the alphabet enriched written culture and rendered it more enduring…"

2.CALLIGRAPHY

Calligraphy, derived from a term meaning "beautiful writing," is defined as the aesthetic practice of writing. It has played a significant role in the historical development of writing by emphasizing its visual and artistic dimensions. From hieroglyphic scripts to Roman inscriptions and Arabic calligraphy, this continuous tradition has enabled writing to acquire aesthetic, cultural, and religious significance. Consequently, calligraphy has persisted throughout history not merely as a functional writing system, but as an independent art form.

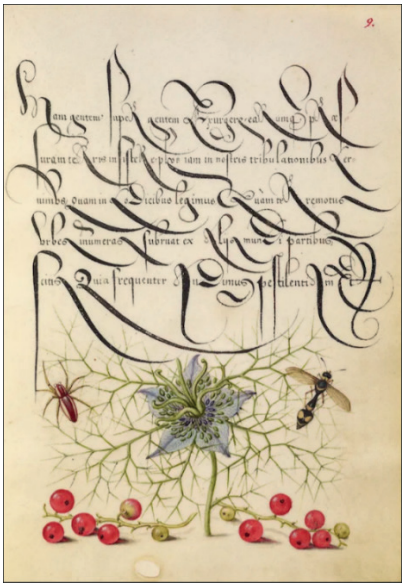


Figure 5. Spider, Love-in-a-Mist, Potter Wasp, and Red Currant (Joris Hoefnagel) (https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/the-model-book-of-calligraphy-1561-1596/?utm) – (Accessed: January 13, 2026)

Today, calligraphy continues to maintain its presence within modern design practices.

Early writing systems such as hieroglyphs laid the foundations of calligraphic art by demonstrating both the communicative and visual value of writing.

2.1. Hierogyphs

With a history in Egypt dating back to approximately 3300 BCE, hieroglyphs were used not only as a means of communication but also as a form of religious, cultural, and aesthetic expression. Egyptian hieroglyphs, in which each symbol carries a specific meaning, are regarded as one of the earliest examples of the art of writing. As Baines (2013, p. 89) states, "…These symbols were carved into walls, temples, and tombs, thereby revealing the religious and artistic dimensions of writing…"

Figure 6. Fragment from the Pyramid of King Pepi I (https://www.worldhistory.org/image/4675/fragment-from-pyramid-of-king-pepi-i/) – (Accessed: January 13, 2026)

The aesthetic value of hieroglyphs demonstrates that writing was not used solely for the transmission of information, but also embodied a distinct sense of visual beauty. Egyptian pharaohs and priests, in particular, sought not only to convey knowledge through writing but also to incorporate artistic and visual elements into their inscriptions. Due to their complex visual structure, hieroglyphs transcended the function of merely representing a language or delivering a message.

2.2. Islamic Calligraphy (Hüsn-i Hat)

This art of writing with Arabic script initially emerged as a simple and functional form of writing, but gradually evolved into an aesthetic mode of expression. Regarded as one of the principal branches of Arabic calligraphy and one of the highest aesthetic forms of writing, Hüsn-i Hat occupies a central position in Islamic visual culture. Its use in the transcription of the Qur'an endowed writing with a sacred status within the Islamic world and played a significant role in the development of this art form. Hüsn-i Hat has been recognized as an art concerned with shaping the visual forms of letters,

transforming writing beyond a mere communicative tool into a medium that reflects both aesthetic sensibilities and religious beliefs.

Figure 7. Basmala Written in the Jali Thuluth (Celî Sülüs) Calligraphic Style from the Sabancı Collection (https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/3316989) – (Accessed: January 13, 2026)

Hüsn-i Hat differs from other Arabic calligraphic styles—such as Kufic, Diwani, and Thuluth particularly in terms of its technical approach and methods of execution. As Hassan (2008, p. 102) states, "…This art form combines the visual beauty of writing with profound meanings, thereby reinforcing the sacred nature of both language and script. In the Islamic world, the frequent use of this style in mosques and sacred spaces has emphasized not only the aesthetic dimension of writing but also its religious significance…"

2.3. Shodō

Shodō is believed to have emerged during the Heian period through the cultural adaptation of Chinese calligraphic practices, developed using the Kanji and Hiragana writing systems. With the onset of the Edo period, Shodō became widespread across all social strata in Japan. During this time, calligraphy schools were established, and Shodō evolved into both an educational practice and a popular art form among the general public. This tradition, which was particularly embraced by female practitioners, differs from Chinese Shufa by placing Zen Buddhism and its meditative principles at the center of artistic practice.

In Japanese culture, writing is regarded not merely as a means of communication but also as a spiritual experience and a form of meditation, which constitutes the philosophical foundation of the Shodō discipline. One of the most distinctive characteristics of Shodō is the dynamic relationship between the speed of writing and the resulting visual form. Culturally, Shodō is understood not only as the representation of characters but also as an external manifestation of the practitioner's inner world.

Figure 8: Mount Fuji, Hawk, and Eggplant (Reigen Eto)
(https://emuseum.mfah.org/objects/149589/mount-fuji-hawk-and-eggplant?utm) – (Accessed: January 13, 2026)

Culturally, Shodō is defined both as a visual art form and as a philosophical practice. For this reason, writing in Shodō is not merely the aesthetic arrangement of characters, but also an artistic expression that reflects the practitioner's emotional state, spiritual strength, and capacity for concentration. As Saito (1996, p. 75) states, "…The practice of Shodō encourages discipline and patience; each brushstroke must be in harmony with the individual's spiritual condition…"

2.4. Shufa

This art form is believed to have emerged during the Qin Dynasty in the third century BCE and to have been further developed during the Tang and Song Dynasties, where it came to be regarded as one of the highest forms of artistic expression. Recognized as both a mode of thought and a philosophical system, Shufa holds profound historical and cultural significance within Chinese culture. One of the distinguishing features of Shufa among other traditions is the association of different character forms and writing styles with the doctrines of various philosophical schools. In this respect, Shufa has become closely intertwined with China's intellectual heritage and cultural legacy.

Figure 9: Running Script Calligraphy (Xíngshū) (Qi Gong)
(https://www.artnet.com/artists/qi-gong/xingshu-running-script-calligraphy-2-works-on-1-84-6Wl0c73vtpZRQ-X1nXA2) – (Accessed: January 13, 2026)

At the core of this calligraphic tradition lies the notion that writing is not merely a linguistic expression, but also a mode of intellectual and philosophical articulation. In Chinese calligraphy, the spiritual state experienced during the act of writing plays a role as significant as the aesthetic form of the characters themselves. Within the Shufa tradition, brush movements are regarded as external manifestations of the artist's inner emotional and spiritual condition. In this context, writing is understood not simply as a technical skill, but as a pursuit of inner balance and harmony. As Dong (2001, p. 88) states, "… Each brushstroke reflects this philosophical perspective, allowing Shufa to transform the act of writing into a spiritual experience…"

2.5.Western Calligraphy

Western calligraphy represents a writing tradition that has been transmitted from the Roman Empire to the present day through manuscripts and inscriptions. During the period commonly referred to as the Middle Ages, this tradition played a significant role in the transcription of religious texts, the illumination of manuscripts, and the transformation of writing into an aesthetic form. With the emergence of Gothic script, Western calligraphy facilitated the gradual evolution of functional writing into a visually expressive artistic form. As Merriam (2014, p. 142) notes, "…With the advent of the Renaissance, Western calligraphy developed further, and the art of writing extended beyond religious texts to become a widespread form of artistic expression. During this period, the aesthetic dimensions of writing gained prominence, and the beauty of letterforms and script structure became a medium of personal expression…"

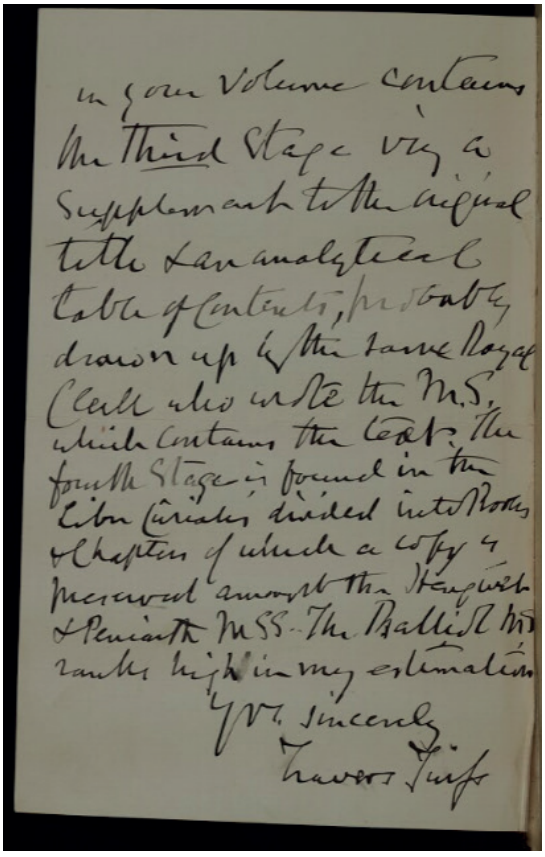


Figure 10: Domesday Book; Glanvill; Britton (https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/65e0a975-bb8c-4647-9f93-017ad657772d/surfaces/f3ac1131-427e-421b-b22a-af0d2e641535/) – (Accessed: January 13, 2026)

Western calligraphy continues today as an art form that reinforces the visual appeal of writing through elegant lines and carefully designed letterforms. Encountered in various fields of graphic design, Western calligraphy is frequently used in special designs, particularly in applications such as wedding invitations.

3. TYPOGRAPHY

Throughout the development process of writing, it has undergone a cultural and aesthetic transformation beyond being merely a tool for communication. This transformation led to the emergence of typography. Typography is an art form concerned with the visual design of letters and other textual elements. It is

appropriate to examine the historical development of typography simultaneously in two areas. The first is production based on aesthetics, and the second is production based on systems. Examples of aesthetically based production can be observed in the early periods of history. One of the most well-known examples of this, in the modern sense, traces the foundations of typography back to the Roman Empire and the Trajan Column. "This work is one of the first examples in which typography is perceived not only as a functional communication tool but also as a visual art form" (Gómez, 2006, p. 15).

After the Roman Empire, typographic design continued its development through manuscripts during the Middle Ages. The handwritten reproduction of texts and the widespread use of Gothic script made the aesthetic dimension of writing more prominent. However, in the 15th century, typography became systematic with Johannes Gutenberg's invention of the printing press.

With the spread of industrialization, artists and designers introduced modern typography in order to highlight their work. Modern typography developed through efforts to balance the phonetic and visual characteristics of letters. One of the fundamental principles of typography is ensuring readability. In addition to being a technical practice, modern typography conveys a cultural mode of expression to societies through the type families used. "…Each typeface reflects the aesthetic understanding and cultural tendencies of the period in which it exists…" (Gómez, 2006, p. 19).

3.1. Early Typography

The early period of typography represents an important stage in the historical journey of writing. in Ancient Rome, the first examples appear as inscriptions carved into stone. In these inscriptions, the visual and aesthetic aspects of writing are brought to the forefront. During this period importance was given not only to the functional aspect of writing but also to its visual beauty. Rome's Trajan Column is one of the most significant examples produced in the early period. "…The Trajan Column is one of the earliest examples in which letters were placed aesthetically onto stone, and these letterforms laid the foundations of the visual and artistic dimensions of typography…" (Gómez, 2006, p. 15).

Figure 11: Trajan's Column
(https://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?id=153) (Access Date: 11.01.2025)

In the Middle Ages, manuscripts produced by hand continued to expand the aesthetic and cultural boundaries of writing. Gothic script, recognized as one of the most characteristic writing styles of the medieval period, has managed to survive to the present day. Throughout its historical development, this form of writing was refined both aesthetically and functionally. During the Middle Ages, writing, which carried not only individual and religious beliefs but also cultural values, evolved beyond its role as a means of transmitting information and became a form of emotional expression as well.

3.2. The Post-Gutenberg Period

The printing devices developed by Johannes Gutenberg played a critical role in shaping typography into its modern form. During this period, the system-based mode of production mentioned above gained prominence. The reproduction and rapid dissemination of written material enabled knowledge to reach wider audiences more efficiently. With the advancement of the printing press, typefaces acquired more practical and aesthetically refined forms. "The invention of the printing press created the foundation for the widespread adoption of typography by bringing together the aesthetic and functional aspects of writing" (Benedetti, 2010, p. 42).

The mechanical reproduction of typefaces facilitated the standardization of layouts and letterforms in printed works. At this stage, the readability of typefaces and their formal characteristics began to gain critical importance in relation to the meaning of the information they conveyed. The foundations of typography as a complex and organized discipline—focused on the systematic

design of letterforms and the balance between aesthetics and functionality—were established during this process.

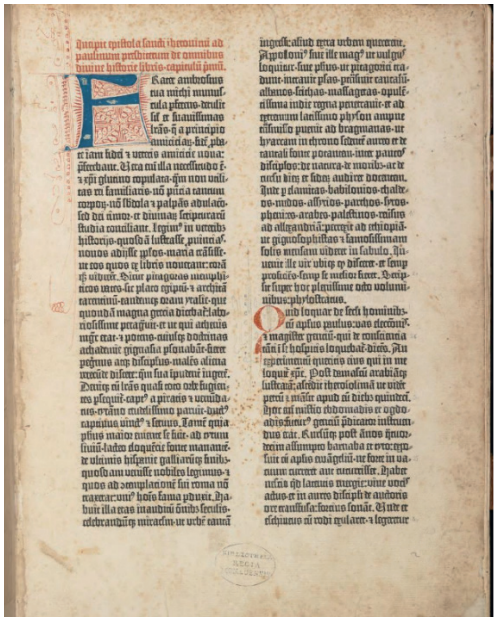


Figure 12: Gutenberg Bible (https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_04102_001/?st=gallery) (Access Date: 10/01/2026)

Written materials produced after the printing devices developed by Gutenberg set a benchmark for the aesthetic and readability standards of the period. As seen in Figure 12, the initial letters at the beginning of lines were ornamented and rendered in different colors to enhance visual emphasis. The initial letter was executed using a lettering technique distinct from that of the remaining text. When the letterforms used in the rest of the text are examined, they can be observed to display similarities to what is today referred to as the "script" type classification.

Based on these observations, it can be argued that in early post-Gutenberg typography, visual appeal and aesthetic considerations were prioritized over readability.

3.3. Modern Typography

Modern typography emerged in response to the needs brought about by technological advancements. In modern typography, each typeface is regarded

as an element that reflects the cultural and aesthetic tendencies of its period. During this era, typefaces were designed with both functionality and aesthetic value in mind. With the advantages provided by industrialization, the mass reproduction and wide dissemination of typefaces were made possible. "... Modern typography not only ensures readability but also reflects the cultural perceptions of societies in aesthetic terms..." (Gómez, 2006, p. 19).

Figure 13: Bauhaus 1919–1928 Catalog (https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2735) – (Access Date: 10 January 2026)

In modern typography, traditional conventions have been set aside, and the hierarchy of priorities has shifted from aesthetics to readability. Especially after the Bauhaus movement, letterforms transitioned from the "script" class to the "sans serif" typeface category, which is characterized by the absence of serifs and the use of clean, straight lines that enhance legibility. In Bauhaus typography, asymmetric composition and the functional placement of words

in relation to visual elements constitute the fundamental principles. With Bauhaus, typography acquired a new form, and its sphere of influence extended beyond the boundaries of art and craft, addressing multiple disciplines by being applied in various fields such as architecture, textiles, and industrial production.

With the widespread adoption of digital platforms, the importance of typography in visual communication has increased exponentially. In addition to typefaces developed specifically for digital platforms, animated typefaces and letterforms that are dynamically reshaped according to their context of use have become increasingly common.

Modern typography has emerged from the intersection of traditional and innovative approaches. This intersection has enabled typography to develop as both a technical and artistic field and has laid the foundations of the contemporary understanding of typography. Today, typefaces carry both aesthetic value and play a crucial role in communication. The selection of typefaces has become one of the most important factors in defining the identity of a brand or a design. "...Typography is a significant means of communication that carries the traces of a culture and operates within a social context..." (Drucker, 2013, p. 61).

4.LETTERING

Lettering is defined as the aesthetic and symbolic shaping of writing. This process enables writing to be used not only as a means of communication but also as a form of aesthetic and cultural expression. Having held an important place in different cultures from ancient civilizations to the present day, lettering has historically ensured that writing conveys not only messages but also aesthetic value. "...Throughout human history, writing has been not only a tool of communication but also an aesthetic and cultural force..." (Lupton, 2010, p. 35).

Figure 14: Memorial Brooch
(https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/19629) – (Access Date: 13 January 2026)

Lettering constitutes a field that carries not only functional but also visual and symbolic value. The earliest examples of lettering, which emerged in Egypt and Mesopotamia, primarily served to record the religious and cultural elements of their respective periods rather than merely to transmit messages. The aesthetic presentation of writing began to be employed during these early periods. "Letters, through their forms, have evolved beyond being merely instruments of language and have become artistic elements that convey visual meanings" (Kress, 2014, p. 72).

Today, lettering has moved beyond traditional practices and plays a significant role in digital design and brand identities. Not only the visual aesthetics of lettering but also its capacity to create visual memory has become an important strategic tool for brands.

4.1. Early Examples

Lettering refers to the artistic and aesthetic shaping of writing and historically shares similarities with calligraphy. It is generally accepted that the earliest examples appeared in texts inscribed on stone or metal plates produced in Egypt and Mesopotamia. In these early instances, writing functioned not primarily as a means of communication but as a tool for recording cultural and religious elements. Lettering contributed to endowing writing with aesthetic value and gradually transformed letterforms into graphic elements. "Each letter, independent of its meaning as an alphabetic unit, is a form in itself that

can function as a symbol, an illustration, and a graphic focal point" (Saltz, 2011, p. 8).

Figure 15: Tomb of Publicius Bibulus
(https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Campitelli_-_Tomba_di_Publicio_Bibulo_sotto_il_Vittoriano_1010183.JPG) – (Access Date: 11 January 2025)

In the Ancient Greek and Roman periods, many inscriptions produced during this time can be considered examples of unconscious lettering practices. These inscriptions not only conveyed their intended messages but also provided writing with a visually pleasing aesthetic form. The layout and forms of letters carved into stone during this period later became a source of inspiration for modern typographic designs.

4.2. Distinction from Typography and Calligraphy

Calligraphy refers to the artistic process of shaping writing into a traditional aesthetic form. Calligraphic works reflect the artist's personal expression, aesthetic skill, and inner world. Each letter carries originality in terms of craftsmanship and visual composition.

Typography, on the other hand, has a more complex and functional system of text organization. Today, typography is produced through the arrangement

of typefaces in digital or print media. In typography, not only the visual appearance of text but also its readability and communicative function are of primary importance. To understand the differences between calligraphy and typography, it is essential to examine their purposes and fields of use. While calligraphy primarily offers an aesthetic and individual mode of expression, typography addresses a social and industrial context.

Lettering, however, occupies a distinct position separate from both typography and calligraphy. Lettering is an art form created by carving letterforms into stone or other hard surfaces. This method enables writing to acquire a physical presence and long-term permanence. Although lettering is closer to the artistic dimensions of typography, it is generally employed to produce aesthetic and symbolic meanings. In this sense, lettering involves the use of writing not only as a means of communication but also as a tool for creating symbolic forms. "…While emphasizing the aesthetic dimension of writing, lettering also plays a significant role as a historical heritage…" (Gómez, 2006, p. 19).

4.3. Examples of Use

Lettering continues to appear in the modern world as a form of expression that demonstrates both physical and cultural permanence and resistance to time. For this reason, lettering functions both as an art form and as a medium of communication. "…Typography carries the traces of culture and serves as an important means of communication within a social context…" (Drucker, 2013, p. 61).

In digital design, brand identities, and logos, lettering techniques are frequently employed. In many contemporary logo designs, letterforms are aesthetically shaped while simultaneously constructing the cultural and visual identity of the brand for users. At this point, the form and design of letters influence the overall aesthetic approach of the brand as well as its interaction with the external world.

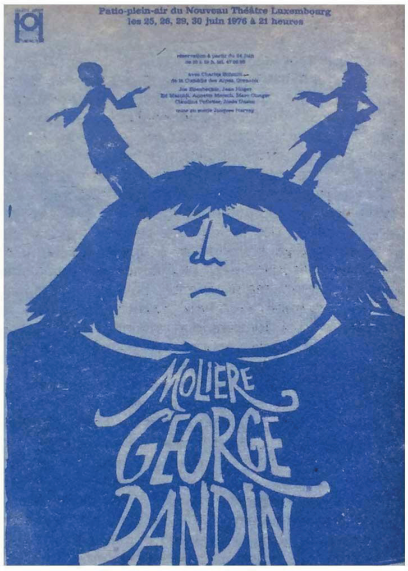


Figure 16: Poster for George Dandin designed by Mengü Ertel (https://www.istanbulsanatevi.com/turk-ressamlar/mengu-ertel-hayati-ve-eserleri/) – (Access Date: 11 January 2025)

Among its areas of application is the creation of both traditional and innovative designs by manipulating the shape and form of letters in digital environments. In this way, the aesthetic values of the past can be combined with the requirements of the modern world. In this context, lettering continues to be integrated into contemporary designs as a reflection of historical cultural heritage.

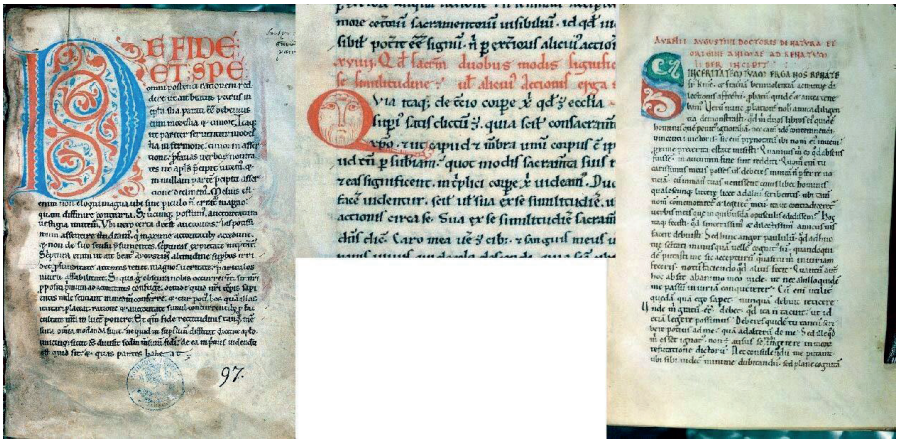


Figure 17: French Manuscripts (https://initiale.irht.cnrs.fr/en/) – (Access Date: 10 January 2026)

Written documents from earlier periods constitute the most explicit evidence demonstrating the distinction between lettering and typography. As can be observed in these examples, only the initial letter is unique and individually designed, while the letters used in the body text remain uniform. This situation visually demonstrates that lettering refers to the production of individual letterforms, whereas typography represents aesthetic practices carried out through typeface families.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the historical development processes of typography and lettering and their roles in the modern world, addressing both the aesthetic and functional dimensions of writing within a theoretical framework. The transformation of writing from its emergence as a communication tool to the present day is directly related to technological possibilities, modes of production, and socio-cultural requirements. In this context, writing has been evaluated not only as a medium for conveying meaning but also as a field of visual, cultural, and ideological representation.

Throughout history, typography has developed as a design discipline centered on the reproducibility and readability of writing. From Roman writing systems to Gothic scripts and the transformation initiated by Gutenberg's printing technology, typography has acquired a systematic structure aimed at balancing aesthetic concerns with functionality. Modern typography, in conjunction with digital production techniques, has positioned typefaces not merely as formal elements but also as carriers of social, cultural, and institutional identity, evolving into a design practice organized around communicative objectives.

Lettering, on the other hand, is addressed as a form of expression that is physical and spatially situated, differing from typography and calligraphy in terms of production processes, material use, and permanence. In Ancient Greek and Roman periods, writing was employed not only for the purpose of information transmission but also as a tangible element carrying monumental, symbolic, and aesthetic value. Through its reliance on singular production and its direct relationship with physical surfaces, lettering has enabled writing to leave a spatial trace, thereby distinguishing itself from reproducible typographic production. Today, lettering continues to exist as a practice that combines historical references with contemporary design approaches, particularly in architectural surfaces, public spaces, and brand identity applications.

In conclusion, this study has clearly differentiated the positions of typography and lettering within writing production based on criteria such as production method, reproducibility, communicative purpose, and context of use. While typography stands out as one of the fundamental tools of modern visual communication through its reproducible structure and communication-oriented design approach, lettering occupies the position of a carrier of cultural heritage by emphasizing the physical, spatial, and permanent qualities of writing. This conceptual distinction contributes to a clearer understanding of both the historical continuity of writing and its multilayered role within contemporary design practices, while also helping to resolve terminological ambiguities in the academic literature.

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CHAPTER 4

THE ENCHANTED DESTINATION OF THE GRAND TOUR: ISTANBUL AS A "WORLD CITY" IN TRAVELOGUES

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Metin MENEKŞE[2]

INTRODUCTION

Travel to the Ottoman Empire and Istanbul

According to Emecen (2025), few cities in world history possess a geographical significance and a socio-political heritage as profound as Istanbul. Situated at a geopolitical crossroads between two continents, there is no doubt that the belief systems shaping the modern world hold a unique place in the historical evolution of this city. Religious and political expectations centered on Istanbul, in both the Eastern and Western worlds, have been presented with a high degree of idealism. Consequently, an Istanbul perception emerged—distinct from its counterparts—that was further reinforced by the various transformations the city underwent. Indeed, the definition of the city, shaped by these political, religious, and cultural shifts, as "the East of the West and

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the West of the East" provides a foundational antithesis that characterizes its unique status (p. 9).

Lewis (2022) notes that the great metropolis on the shores of the Bosphorus has been known by many names. The Slavs called it Tsargrad, meaning "The City of the Emperor," while the Northerners referred to it as Myklagaard or Micklegarth, signifying "The Great City" (p. 7). Lewis further praises Istanbul by quoting a traditional saying: "No matter how long the sun circles the earth, it shall never find another city like Istanbul" (pp. 94-95).

As conveyed by Aksoy (2004), since the foundation of the Ottoman State, Western historians and travelogues have observed daily life, political mechanisms, and the cultural and social fabric of the Empire, thereby establishing certain enduring perspectives regarding "Turkishness." Throughout various historical periods, Europe's attitude toward the Turks shifted in accordance with Ottoman military victories. Furthermore, the bilateral relations each country maintained with the Ottoman State shaped their specific "Turkish image"; even within the same timeframe, differing perspectives emerged among various social strata of the same nation. Consequently, it is difficult to speak of a monolithic or holistic "Turkish image" within European history and geography (pp. VII-VIII).

According to Şirin (2012), travelers embarking on adventurous journeys for various reasons explored their surroundings with a sense of immense curiosity and recorded diverse observations. For them, traveling was an end in itself. There were multiple motivations for these individuals to set out, braving all the dangers and hardships of the road. These motives were triggered at times by curiosity, at others by a sense of adventure, or by the drive for discovery and exploration (p. 103).

Travelers, while conveying their personal observations and firsthand experiences, did not neglect to record information gleaned from written sources or accounts heard from second and third parties. In this regard, they utilized Turkish and foreign newspapers reporting on Europe, as well as letters received by themselves or their acquaintances from their home countries as primary sources. Ultimately, they produced works encompassing all these diverse elements. Consequently, the travelers who visited the Ottoman capital during different periods and their subsequent works are of great significance for historical inquiry. Any reader or researcher interested in the daily life of the Payitaht (the capital), palace visits, developments at the Bab-ı Ali (Sublime Porte), state officials, the press, fires, wars and conflicts, epidemics, minorities, social organizations, commercial activities, or the empire's vast

Balkan, Anatolian, and Arabian geographies can access vital information, observations, analyses, and intricate details from an external perspective.

The term seyahatnâme, composed of the Arabic seyâhat (originally siyâhat), meaning "to travel/tour," and the Persian nâme, meaning "treatise/letter" (Yazıcı, 2009, p. 9), refers to works compiled from the notes and travel memoirs kept by a traveler during their journeys. Etymologically, seyâhat is derived from the root seyh, which signifies "the continuous flow of water on the earth." While it is defined in dictionaries as "walking, going; wandering to sow discord; or traveling the earth for a life of devotion and asceticism," those who journey across the land are called sâih or seyyâh (traveler), likened to the way water flows upon the earth (Çağrıcı, 2009, p. 7).

Travelogues offer a distinct window into the past by providing various insights into the geographical and administrative structures of the places visited, as well as the traditions, customs, lifestyles, and socio-cultural and economic conditions of the local populations (Yılmaz, 2016, p. 21). By presenting detailed data on numerous facets of human life, they contribute significantly to illuminating historical points that remain obscure. Consequently, the memoirs, letters, and diaries of eyewitnesses play a complementary role in retrieving information regarding social and cultural life where official records may fall short (Şahin, 2017, p. 32). The notes of travelers provide us with vibrant anecdotes that are more colorful and dynamic than the dry information presented by official authorities—details that formal documents often fail to capture (Ünal et al., 2022, p. 12).

It is well-established that from the late 18th century onward, the fashion of traveling spread daily among the European elite, and Istanbul became an integral part of the itinerary known as the "Grand Tour." By the 19th century, Istanbul had become a primary focal point of interest for Westerners in its own right (Baratta, 2021, p. IV). Accordingly, the travelogue became an immensely popular literary genre during those years, with dozens of works penned specifically about Istanbul. In fact, in his preface to the latest edition of Edmondo De Amicis's (2009) Constantinople, Umberto Eco argued that Istanbul travelogues should be regarded as a distinct literary genre (p. 7).

Istanbul is a city that has commanded attention in every period due to its nature, climate, strategic location, and history. Indeed, as the poet Nedim famously expressed: "This city of Istanbul is of such priceless value / That the whole realm of Persia is sacrificed for a single one of its stones / Is the supreme paradise beneath it or above it? / In truth, what a state is this, what a pleasant climate and atmosphere." In the face of Istanbul's beauty, splendor,

and majesty, many have found themselves breathless and silenced in awe (Ayaşlı, 2024, p. 127).

Istanbul is an exceptional city with a historical memory that serves as a center of gravity for humanity. As a capital of empires, it has been graced with the interest of many observers and travelers in every era, finding new life within their memoirs. Istanbul was not merely a destination for those who set out solely for travel; it was a crucial stop, particularly for Christian pilgrims journeying to the Holy Land. Furthermore, the city secured a place in the records of embassy delegations, merchants, scientists, and numerous guests who had to pass through for various purposes.

A point of consensus among all travelers regarding Istanbul is its poetic essence, its vibrant and bustling streets, and its enchanting scenery. As major cities in Europe and Russia acquired a modern and contemporary appearance in the 19th century, travelers visiting Istanbul often resorted to comparative descriptions of the Ottoman capital. Squares, avenues, parks, and cultural and artistic structures were explored, leading to various descriptive analyses.

Within the scope of this research, travelogues from different centuries were examined and various evaluations were made. The data obtained from these analyzed travelogues are presented in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1. Information Regarding the Travelogues Used in the Study

	Traveler Name	Title of the Travelogue	Century/ Date	Nationality
1-	Luigi Bassano	Kanuni Dönemi Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Gündelik Hayat	1532 1540	İtalyan
2-	Pierre Belon	Pierre Belon Seyahatnamesi	1546	Fransız
3-	Jean Chesneau	D'Aramon Seyahatnamesi Kanuni Devrinde İstanbul- Anadolu Mezopotamya	1547	Fransız
4-	Nicolas De Nicolay	Muhteşem Süleyman'ın İmparatorluğunda	1551	Fransız
5-	Ogier Ghiselin De Busbeq	Türkiye'yi Böyle Gördüm	1554 1562	Fransız
6-	Philippe du Fresne-Canaye	Fresne-Canaye Seyahatnamesi	1573	Fransız
7-	Stephan Gerlach	Türkiye Günlüğü 1573-1576	1573 1576	Alman
8-	Salomon Schweigger	Sultanlar Kentine Yolculuk 1578-1581	1578 1581	Alman
9-	Polonyalı Simeon	Polonyalı Bir Seyyahın Gözünden 16. Asır Türkiyesi	1608	Polonyalı
10-	Crailsheimli Adam Werner	Padişahın Huzurunda, Elçilik Günlüğü 1616-1618	1616 1618	Almanya
11-	Du Loir	Seyahatnamesi IV. Murad Döneminde Bir Fransız Seyyahın Maceraları	1639	Fransız
12-	Jean Thevenot	1655-1656'da TÜRKİYE	1655 1656	Fransız

13-	Eremya Çelebi Kömürcüyan	İstanbul Tarihi XVII. Asırda İstanbul	1662	Ermeni
14-	Nointel Markisi	Bir Büyükelçinin Macerası Nointel Markisi'nin Seyahatleri 1670-1680 (Yazarı: Albert Vandal)	1670-1680	Fransız
15-	Jean Chardin	Chardin Seyahatnamesi	1671-1673	Fransız
16-	Gauillaume Joseph Grelot	İstanbul Seyahatnamesi	1672	Fransız
17-	Timote Gabaşvili, Giorgio Eristavi	Osmanlı ve Avrupa Topraklarında Beş Gürcü Seyyah ve Seyahatnameleri	18. ve 19. yüzyıllar	Gürcü
18-	Joseph De Tournefort	Tournefort Seyahatnamesi	1700 1702	Fransız
19-	Lady Montaqu	Türkiye Mektupları	1717 1718	İngiliz
20-	Baron De Tott	Türkler ve Tatarlara Dair Hatıralar	1755 1774	Fransız
21-	Pavel Artemyeviç Levaşov	Esir Bir Rus Diplomatın Gözünden İstanbul Pavel Artemyeviç Levaşov'un Hatıraları	1763	Rus
22-	Domenico Sestini	Boğaziçi 1778	1778	Floransa
23-	Domenico Sestini	Boğaziçi 1779	1779	Floransa
24-	Giovanni Battista Casti	Bir İstanbul Seyahati 1788	1788	İtalyan
25-	Lady Craven	Kırım'dan İstanbul'a Yolculuk	1789	İngiliz
26-	Oliver	Türkiye Seyahatnamesi 1790 Yıllarında Türkiye''	1790'lar	Fransız
27-	Guillaume Martin	İstanbul'a Seyahat	1794	Fransız
28-	William Wittman	Osmanlı'ya Yolculuk	1799	İngiliz
29-	Joseph Von Hammer	İstanbul Günleri	1799 1806	Avusturyalı
30-	Palyakov Nikolay	Osmanlı ve Türkler	19. yüzyıl	Rus
31-	Ulrich Jasper Seetzen	İstanbul Günlükleri '' 12 Aralık 1802- 22 Haziran 1803''Kitap I Anadolu'ya Yolculuk ''22 Haziran 1803-22 Kasım 1803 Kitap II	1802 1803	Alman
32-	Mirza Fettah Han Germrudi	İranlı Yolcuların Gözünden Osmanlı İstanbul'u (Derleyen Yasemin Asadi)	1802-1905	İranlı
33-	Edward Raczynski	1814'te İstanbul ve Çanakkale'ye Seyahat	1814	Polonyalı
34-	Robert Walsh	İrlandalı Bir Vaizin Gözüyle II. Mahmud İstanbul'u	1821	İrlandalı
35-	Helmuth Von Moltke	Moltke'nin Türkiye Mektupları	1830'lu yıllar	Alman
36-	Antonıo Baratta	1831 İstanbul	1831	İtalyan
37-	Julia Pardoe	Sultanlar Şehri İstanbul ve Türkler'in Ev İçi Davranışları I Sultanlar Şehri İstanbul ve 1836'da Türklerin Ev İçi Davranışları II	1836	İngiliz
38-	Charles White	İstanbul'da Üç Yıl '' Türkler' in Örf ve Adetleri" 1841-1844	1841 1844	İngiliz
39-	Ida Pfeiffer	Doğu'ya Seyahat	1842 1845	Avusturyalı
40-	Gerard De Nerval	İstanbul Yolunda	1843	Fransız
41-	Albert Richard Smith	İstanbul'da Bir Ay	1846 1849	İngiliz

42-	Charles Macfarlane	Türkiye'nin Durumunu İncelemek Üzere 1847 ve 1848 Yıllarında Yapılan Bir Yolculuğun Raporu, Türkiye ve Yazgısı	1847-1849	İskoç
43-	Mary Mills Patrick	Son Sultanların İstanbul'unda	1850	Amerikalı
44-	Henry Christmast	İstanbul ve Ege Yollarında	1851	İngiliz
45-	Lady Hornby	Kırım Savaşı Sırasında İstanbul	1853	İngiliz
46-	George William Frederick Howard	Türk Sularında Seyahat	1853'lü yıllar	İngiliz
47-	Theophile Gautier	İstanbul, Dünyanın En Güzel Şehri	1856	Fransız
48-	Baronne Durand De Fontmagne	Kırım Harbi Sonrasında İstanbul Günlükleri	1855 1858	Fransız
49-	Hristo Stambolski	Bir Osmanlı Hekiminin Anılarıyla İmparatorluğun Zor Yılları 1858-1878	1858	Bulgar
50-	Mihail Macarov	Bulgar Gözüyle İstanbul (Haz. Hüseyin Mevsim)	1864	Bulgar
51-	Hagop Baronyan	İstanbul Mahallelerinde Bir Gezinti	1864-1880	
52-	Edmondo de Amicis	İstanbul	1878 1879	İtalyan
53-	Nikola Naçov	Bursa'ya Gidiş ve Dönüş	1879	Bulgar
54-	Edmond About	Fransa'dan İstanbul'a Pontoise'den İstanbul'a	1883	Fransız
55-	Nevvab Ömer Han	Payitahtın Misafirleri Hindistanlı Seyyahların Kaleminden II. Abdülhamid Dönemi (Haz. Zeynep Altınköprü)	1883	Hindistanlı
56-	Dorina L. Neave	Sultan Abdülhamit Döneminde İstanbul'da Gördüklerim	1881	İngiliz
57-	Francıs Marıon Crawford	İstanbul 1890	1890	İtalyan
58-	Georgina Max Müller	İstanbul'dan Mektuplar	1893	İngiliz
59-	Todor Yankov	İstanbul'dan İzlenimler	1898	Bulgar
60-	K.Hamsun-H.C. Andersen	İstanbul'da İki İskandinav Seyyah	1899	İskandinav
61-	Evgenia Mars	Abdülhamit İstanbul'unda Bir Kadın Seyyah	1907	Bulgar
62-	Vicente Blasco Ibanez	İspanyol Seyyahın Anadolu Anıları	1907	İspanyol
63-	S. G. Bayne	Bir Gemi Turunda Ziyaret Edilen Akdeniz Şehirleri	1909	İngiliz
64-	Corci Zeydan	İstanbul'a Seyahat	1909	Lübnan
65-	Grace Ellison	İstanbul'da Bir Konak ve Yeni Kadınlar İngiliz Kadın Gazetecinin Gözüyle Türk Evi ve Gündelik Hayat	1915	İngiliz

FINDINGS

Istanbul Through the Eyes of Western Travelers

1. Travelers' Expressions of Admiration Regarding Istanbul's Location, History, and Nature

While there are subjective differences in the observations of travelers visiting Istanbul, there are numerous points upon which a common consensus is reached. They particularly agree that Istanbul possesses an unparalleled landscape, a poetic location, and a deep-rooted history. Many travelers were captivated by Istanbul, appearing virtually spellbound in its presence. They noted that as they approached the city, their excitement grew, they became tongue-tied, and words remained inadequate in the face of the vista before them.

1.1. Expressions of Female Travelers

Visiting in the 18th century, Lady Montagu (1973) expressed her admiration by drawing parallels with her own geography: "Pera [Beyoğlu] is just as much on the outskirts of the city here as Westminster is in London. From here, the harbor, the city, the palace, and the distant mountains of Anatolia are all visible. This is the most beautiful view in the world" (p. 93).

Lady Craven (2024), who visited Istanbul in 1789, felt profound admiration for the city's positioning: "The entrance of Istanbul and the Bosphorus into the Sea of Marmara is the most magnificent, majestic, elegant, and vibrant scene that the most fertile imagination could ever desire to see" (p. 154). According to Craven, this enchanting atmosphere and natural beauty resembled an earthly paradise: "This beautiful, enchanting country—its climate, its objects, its location—renders it an earthly paradise" (p. 157).

Figure 1: Istanbul and the Golden Horn (Giovanni Battista Casti, 2019, p. 6)

Julia Pardoe (2024), upon her arrival in 1836, recorded her first impressions: "On December 30, 1835, my long-cherished hopes were finally realized, and the queen of cities stood before me, enthroned upon her populous hills, with the silver Bosphorus, adorned with palaces, flowing at her feet!" (p. 17). Unable to conceal her awe, she described her emotions as follows: "I felt as though I were looking upon a fairy realm; I was seeing the embodiment of my wildest dreams; I was an inhabitant of a new world" (pp. 17-18). Regarding the extraordinary scenery and historical sites, she remarked: "To a European eye, this landscape is of extraordinary beauty and entirely new..." (p. 19); "Thus far, I have been unable to liken the harbor of Istanbul to anything less delightful than poetry put into action" (p. 21); "Had I landed at Tophane upon arriving in Turkey, I would have imagined myself a spectator to one of the scenes narrated by the storyteller Scheherazade" (p. 213); "Hagia Sophia appeared to me like a work of enchantment" (p. 277); "Before the magnificent view of the Bosphorus, I felt spellbound, doubting my own identity" (p. 330).

Figure 2: Üsküdar and Mihrimah Sultan Mosque (Antonio Baratta, 2021, p. 47)

Pardoe also observed the Bosphorus and the Göksu River, noting: "To be seen in all its beauty, the Bosphorus must be viewed by moonlight" (p. 132). "It is a landscape without equal in the world. Shakespeare must have imagined the Bosphorus while writing the garden scene in Romeo and Juliet" (p. 132). "Indeed, if a European were taken to Göksu without any prior preparation, they would believe themselves under a sorcerer's spell and see realized what they had previously regarded as the exaggeration of an Oriental storyteller" (p. 185).

Ida Pfeiffer (2023), who resided in Istanbul between 1842 and 1845, used the following expressions as she approached the city: "Before my eyes, sprawling across several hills- each containing a city within itself-yet in an entirely harmonious and majestic manner, lay the city of cities" (p. 61). She felt fortunate to witness this enchanting view, stating that only a poet could truly describe it: "Beholding these magnificent vistas of the Orient, I felt generously rewarded for this arduous journey. If only I were a poet, so that I might worthily describe this wonderfully splendid world..." (p. 62). During her tour, she noted seeing "landscapes that even the boldest imagination could not conceive of more beautifully" (p. 74), and asserted that "even the most skillful pen is incapable of describing it" (p. 75). Regarding Istanbul, she claimed: "I can assert that no point in the world offers a similar tableau or can be compared to this," while emphasizing the city's unique characteristics compared to European cities:

"How right I was to prefer this journey over others! Everything is different: nature, art, people... If you wish to see something other than the daily life of European cities and their inhabitants, you must certainly come here" (p. 75).

Mary Mills Patrick (2017), who arrived in Istanbul in 1850, emphasized the enduring nature of the city's name, asserting that regardless of historical shifts, it remains—as Pardoe suggested—the "Queen of Cities": "Istanbul may perhaps be renamed in the future after another hero. However, this city will always be the 'Queen of Cities,' as named by ancient writers" (pp. 29-30). Furthermore, she posited that the city does not belong to a single nation but acts as a unifying element belonging to both continents: "It has certainly never appeared to belong to a single nation; on the contrary, its sparkling waters and slopes unite all countries. It is neither purely European nor Asian, but belongs to both" (pp. 29-30). Believing that approaching Istanbul from any direction is an evocative experience, she concurred with a 17th-century traveler: "Approaching this city from any direction is indescribably impressive. In the words of a 17th-century traveler, 'I believe seeing Istanbul is more valuable than seeing all of Italy'" (p. 30). Despite witnessing the reigns of five different Ottoman sultans over fifty-three years, Patrick expressed a desire to stay even longer, regardless of regime changes: "I had spent fifty-three years during the successive reigns of five sultans in the Ottoman State; how I would have loved to stay here for another fifty years!" (p. 354).

Figure 3: The Bosphorus from the Hills of Beşiktaş (Pierre de Tchihatchef, 2023, p. 257)

Lady Hornby (2021), arriving in 1853 during the Crimean War, emphasized the strategic importance of Istanbul's location: "The first thought that comes to mind is that 'A good regime could lead or govern the entire world from here'" (p. 34). In a letter to her mother, she described her beloved Bosphorus with a poetic duality: "The Bosphorus possesses a beauty certainly created to draw all the world's gazes upon it. When it smiles, nothing in the world can be more radiant and shimmering; yet when it is angry, it assumes an uncontrollable wildness, albeit an elegant fury. This attempt at description may bore you, but you would never be bored in the face of its true beauty" (p. 68). Upon visiting Kadıköy, a place she wished to revisit in her dreams, she remarked: "This is where you gaze in wonder at this dreamlike charm. Perhaps when I return to England, I may see this place again in my dreams" (p. 72).

De Fontmagne (2022), residing in Istanbul between 1855 and 1858, found the city to surpass her imagination and agreed with the poets who likened it to a beautiful woman. Expressing a reluctance to leave even for paradise, she noted: "As one approaches Istanbul, the landscape transcends what is imagined. Only then can the enthusiasm of the Oriental poets be understood: 'The city bends toward the sea, and the waves merely wash its knees. The city, resembling a woman as beautiful as the moon, has an aqueduct around her waist.' No one wishes to leave Istanbul; one would not desert this city even to go to heaven" (p. 47). Fontmagne so admired the city's location that she highlighted a universal consensus: "Everyone agrees that Istanbul occupies the most beautiful position a city can have in the world; it is as if nature created this place specifically to dominate and rule the world, and it is impossible for people to dream of a more beautiful capital" (p. 139). She supported this view by citing Napoleon: "Indeed, Napoleon was quite right when he called Istanbul 'the key to the world' and refused to leave it to Tsar Alexander in exchange for Italy and part of Europe" (p. 47).

Figure 4: Istanbul and the Golden Horn (Francis Marion Crawford, 2022, p. 9)

Dorina L. Neave (2008), who arrived in 1881, focused on religious sites. Regarding Hagia Sophia, her first stop, she wrote: "We went to Hagia Sophia. When those immense entrance gates are thrown wide open, no one can stand within that majestic structure—no matter how skeptical regarding religion—without feeling a sense of awe mixed with admiration and respect" (p. 70). Of the Süleymaniye Mosque, she remarked: "The exterior of the Süleymaniye Mosque is much, much more beautiful. With its magnificent symmetry, it is one of the rarest examples of pure Turkish architecture" (p. 72).

Mrs. Max Müller (1978), arriving in 1893, compared Istanbul's vista with every other city she had visited, concluding it was the most beautiful: "Our first impression is that this city is more beautiful than all the countries we have seen thus far" (p. 13). During her journey along the Bosphorus, she struggled to describe the scenery, arguing that the praise given to major European sites also applied here: "All pens remain utterly inadequate before this magnificent panorama unfolding on the Bosphorus" (p. 19). She questioned why travelers constantly preferred familiar European routes: "Why is it that people return year after year to Germany, Switzerland, and Rome, yet do not visit Istanbul, which is an entirely new world with an excellent climate? What is said of the Trevi Fountain in Rome and the River Nile can just as well be said of the waters of the Bosphorus. Those who see them once will always feel the desire to see these places again" (p. 19). Contrasting it with the "weak Byzantium" of the past, she likened the city to a living heart: "Istanbul today is by no means the

deserted and weakened Byzantium of the Middle Ages; on the contrary, it is full of life, a vibrant, beating heart" (p. 22).

Evgenia Mars (2022), who arrived in 1907, conveyed the excitement she felt as she approached Istanbul with these words: "I grew impatient as we neared Istanbul. I wanted to see this historic city as soon as possible, whose poetic location is praised by the entire world" (p. 24). She also expressed a deep-seated regret that such a beautiful city was not under European control: "I felt a great sadness from the depths of my heart that this realm, unique in the world for its fairytale-like location, did not belong to Europeans" (p. 33). Regarding the Bosphorus, one of Istanbul's peerless vistas, she noted: "I do not believe there is a scene more dazzling than the sight of the Bosphorus" (p. 30); "A marvelous tableau stretched before us. The pen of a mere mortal remains inadequate to describe this poetic scene; the Creator must have employed His entire creative genius to fashion such a beautiful earthly paradise from the Bosphorus" (p. 32). Furthermore, she remarked on the natural beauty of the Göksu River: "Mother Nature has rarely gathered so much beauty in one place as seen in this tableau of turquoise, emerald, and light" (p. 45). Highlighting the significance of Hagia Sophia, one of the city's paramount religious sites, she stated: "We wanted to visit this world-famous sacred place at all costs. For a tourist, visiting Istanbul without seeing Hagia Sophia is like going to Egypt and not seeing the pyramids" (p. 36). Mars also included a striking testimony by the Bulgarian writer Ivan Vazov from his article titled "Bulgaria on the Bosphorus": "For a writer to attempt to describe the magical image of Istanbul means repeating for the millionth time what European travelers, tourists, and poets have already said about the unique beauty and grandeur of this world capital—and yet, it still conveys very little to someone who has not visited or seen it" (p. 76).

Grace Ellison (2017), arriving in 1915, was virtually spellbound by the harmonious colors of the sunset over the Sea of Marmara. In her work, she expressed that such a magnificent sight allowed her to understand even sun-worshippers: "Such a magnificent sunset can only be seen in the East" (p. 20). "The Sea of Marmara turns into a wonderful riot of colors—purple, red, blue, and yellow. Could there be a sight more magnificent than this? I understand sun-worshippers much better now" (p. 21).

1.2. Expressions of Male Travelers

Luigi Bassano (2020), who resided in Istanbul between 1532 and 1540, visited the palaces of the city and offered the following commentary: "The Palace of Istanbul [Topkapı Palace] is worthy of much praise as it is the most

beautiful... Prince Mustafa's palace is also of extraordinary beauty, equal to that of his father's" (pp. 49, 55).

Pierre Belon (2020), arriving in 1546, emphasized that Istanbul's location constituted a significant element of power for its ruler: "There is no city in the world established in a more suitable place than Istanbul to demonstrate the majesty of a monarch" (p. 56). He also signaled the unique standing of Hagia Sophia among other historical sites: "The Church of Hagia Sophia is the most elegant building among all those still standing. Anyone who sees it will no longer feel admiration for the Pantheon in Rome, now called Santa Maria Rotonda" (p. 56).

Jean Chesneau (2022), arriving in 1547, described the must-see locations and expressed his profound admiration for Turkish mosques, particularly the Süleymaniye: "There are also beautiful baths and very pleasant fountains worth seeing. Many other mosques belonging to Sultan Selim, Sultan Bayezid, and other lords can be seen. These are of extraordinary beauty, magnificent, and ostentatious. The one commissioned by Sultan Suleiman is more beautiful and striking than any of the others" (p. 23).

Nicolas de Nicolay (2014), arriving in 1551, emphasized the beauty of the city's location and identified it with the concept of empire: "Istanbul is both the eye and the reflection of the empire" (p. 39).

Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq (2004), who was in Istanbul between 1554 and 1562, underscored the importance of the city's site: "Istanbul is established in such a position that no place more beautiful or more suitable can be imagined" (p. 46).

Fresne-Canaye (2017), arriving in 1573, was captivated by the Bosphorus and noted that its beauty was beyond description: "However, so as not to prolong the narrative of the beauty of this extraordinarily magnificent strait, which has been described by countless people before, I shall content myself with recounting my excursion here" (p. 61). He added: "It would be quite arduous to describe all the beauties of the Bosphorus" (p. 65), and "We were enchanted and mesmerized by what we saw on the shores of the Bosphorus" (p. 66). During his visit to Hagia Sophia, he was so moved by the unique architecture that he agreed with a striking earlier metaphor: "According to those who liken the city to an eagle with its wings spread, this place is called the 'Eye of Istanbul' both for its unique architecture and its location. Sarayburnu is the eagle's beak, and Hagia Sophia is its eye" (p. 68).

Figure 5: A View of Old Istanbul from Beyoğlu (Pierre de Tchihatchef, 2023, p.8)

Stephan Gerlach (2017), who stayed in Istanbul between 1573 and 1576, described the city's immense significance: "Istanbul is certainly a world city [world metropolis]" (p. 22).

Salomon Schweigger (2004), residing in Istanbul between 1578 and 1581, provided data on the various names given to the city. Beyond the well-known "Constantinople," he noted various historical usages, mentioning that with Turkish rule, the name "Stambol" or "Stambul" began to be used: "Historians use various names when speaking of the city of Constantinople. Sometimes they call it Byzantium, and sometimes they use one of the names Anthusa, Aethusa, Antinia, or Nova Roma. The Turks call this city 'Stambol' (Istanbul). This name is derived from the Greek words 'is tin polin' and means 'to the city' or, in the parlance of villagers living outside neighboring cities, it means 'inside the city.' In Croatian, the names Czarigrad or Czarondom, meaning 'where the emperor lives,' are also used, because Constantinus Magnus chose this city as his residence, and since then, Ottoman rulers—like all Eastern monarchs—reside in this city..." (p. 118). "...Sultan Mehmed II (1451-1481) repelled the armies of European knights and finally conquered the city of Constantinople (Byzantium) in 1453. Henceforth, the city was called Istanbul or Stambul and was declared the capital of the Ottoman state and the city where its sultans lived..." (p. 213).

Simeon of Poland (2016), arriving in 1608, expressed his emotions upon nearing the city he had impatiently waited to see: "Finally, we reached Istanbul, the glorious capital city that everyone desires" (p. 15). Visiting Hagia Sophia,

he asserted that the effort expended on it was beyond measure and incomparable to any other structure. Emphasizing that a single pair of eyes was insufficient to grasp its artistic spirit, he wrote: "For it is beyond anyone's capacity to properly describe the beauty of the building or to keep an account of the expenses incurred. Thus, how can I, a humble man of the lowest rank of the clergy, praise Hagia Sophia or compare it with any other building?" (p. 19). "One would need a thousand eyes to savor this artistic beauty" (p. 17).

Adam Werner (2011), who was in Istanbul between 1616 and 1618, defined the city as the "Ottoman Gate" (Osmanlı Kapısı): "It is known as the Ottoman Gate. Since its foundation, this has been the most famous and important city of the East" (p. 91). Upon reaching the Golden Horn, he observed thousands of boats called pereme and made a comparison with the West: "According to those who have traveled extensively, their number is greater than the gondolas in Venice" (p. 91). Of Hagia Sophia, he remarked: "The Turks call it Hagia Sophia. This very famous house of worship is truly a building worth seeing" (p. 92).

Figure 6: Dolmabahçe Palace and its Environs (CNF, 2005, p. 228)

Du Loir (2023), arriving in 1639, emphasized the strategic advantage of the city's location: "No one has ever seen a place as advantageous as Istanbul's location, and this city is the most beautiful of the world's cities" (p. 40). "It

appears that possessing this city was the most obvious sign of strength for any of the parties involved" (p. 41).

Jean Thévenot (1978), in Istanbul during 1655-1656, noted the consensus on the beauty of the location: "Everyone who sees Istanbul agrees that it is the most beautiful place in the world, as it possesses a location that dominates the entire world" (p. 55). "Many assume that Istanbul is not larger than Cairo or Paris, but they are mistaken, for it is no smaller than either of these two cities" (p. 58).

Eremya Çelebi Kömürcüyan (2025), the Armenian intellectual given the title Çelebi for his scholarship, viewed Istanbul not just as an important city but as a center where the world's wealth was most densely concentrated throughout history: "These constituted a marvelous fortune. Such beautiful and precious items had never been seen during the conquests of Alexander, Charlemagne, or any earlier period. In my opinion, the items found in Istanbul could not be found even in the forty wealthiest cities of the world. As the Greeks say, two-thirds of the world's existing wealth is in Istanbul, while the remaining third is scattered throughout the rest of the world" (p. 154).

According to Albert Vandal (2024), conveying the travels of the Marquis de Nointel (in Istanbul 1670-1680), the traveler, rather than longing for his homeland, turned his gaze to the vista Istanbul offered and was virtually spellbound: "Instead of living with the dream of his homeland, he turned his eyes to the things around him. The sight he saw was truly worth the trouble" (p. 70). "Istanbul, lying beyond Pera and its churches, soon drew him in, even enchanted him" (p. 71). Describing the magnificent scene where the Bosphorus and the harbor meet, he wrote: "Further in, a captivating view was visible, which remains unchanged even today: the entrance to the Bosphorus and the harbor... The palace of the Ottoman Emperors and the point where Istanbul begins" (p. 199).

Figure 7: A View from Istanbul (Guillaume Martin, 2007, p. 64)

Jean Chardin (2014), who spent two years in Istanbul between 1671 and 1673, remarked on the Bosphorus: "The Thracian Bosphorus is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful places in the world" (p. 91). He praised Istanbul's vista, noting: "Istanbul presents an unparalleled spectacle and offers the most magnificent point of view one could ever encounter" (p. 91).

Guillaume Joseph Grelot (2025), arriving in 1672, validated the accounts of previous writers through his own observations: "I noticed in the narratives I read that the most significant part of my observations largely coincided with what some famous travelers before me had recounted" (p. 11). He considered a journey to Istanbul not a mere trip but an experience that evoked multiple emotions simultaneously: "For a gentleman to travel to Istanbul and see the surrounding countries is undoubtedly one of the most delightful pleasures possible. This journey offers one the most admirable observations; for the traveler attains the honor of seeing the most enchanting landscapes nature spreads before the eyes, the most attractive scenes imaginable with the pleasant locations of cities, and the beautiful remains belonging to the splendor and grandeur of the Eastern emperors left behind by time" (p. 17). Spellbound by what he saw, Grelot wrote: "This place, without a doubt, offers a beauty seen nowhere else in the world. No sight your eyes will behold while approaching Istanbul can be as enchanting. For me, upon first arriving, a feeling arose as if I were entering a magical island" (p. 63). He likened the city to an amphitheater: "As one approaches the city, the number of houses increases. They rise tier upon tier, assuming the appearance of an amphitheater, which

offers an extraordinarily beautiful sight" (p. 64). He viewed the city as a work where history, nature, and art were intertwined, emphasizing its exceptional character: "In short, when you enter the harbor of this great city, wherever you turn your eyes, you see with admiration how generous nature has been to Istanbul and how carefully this location was chosen. That is why the Roman Emperors easily abandoned their own capitals, moved the center of the empire here, and gave it their own name. No other city can offer such a universal view at a single glance; the height of its towers seems designed to deliver orders to neighboring realms. If art and nature had wished to unite to display beauty and abundance equally, they could not have produced a more successful work than Istanbul" (p. 64).

Figure 8: A View of Istanbul and the Golden Horn (Edmondo de Amicis, 2009, Engravings)

According to Tournefort (2013), who was in Istanbul between 1700 and 1702, the city was immensely admirable, large, and wealthy—a greatness linked not just to its physical size but to its historical, cultural, and strategic importance: "With its outer districts, Istanbul is indisputably the largest city in Europe" (p. 11). "If the ancient Byzantines were to return to the world, they would perhaps feel admiration at the extraordinary size of their city" (p. 25). He believed the Bosphorus was created by nature specifically to carry all wealth to this unique city: "According to the common view of all travelers and even ancient historians, the city's location is in the most beautiful and advantageous place in the world; the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus were opened as if to deliver to it the riches coming from the four corners of the earth" (p. 11). Like many travelers, he was impressed before even entering the city, likening the rising structures—palaces, mosques, and even churches—to an amphitheater,

viewing the city as a harmony of civilizations: "Before entering the city, one admires the exterior once again; the houses, balconies, and gardens forming many amphitheaters, above which rise bazaars, caravanserais, palaces, and especially mosques or churches (to explain for the French, we have nothing like this in France)" (p. 14). He noted Galata as a "Christian city in the heart of Turkey": "In Galata, a taste of freedom is enjoyed that is never found elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire. Galata is like a Christian city in the heart of Turkey" (p. 38).

Timote Gabaşvili (2021), a clergyman and writer who set out in 1750 to visit sacred sites, used poetic expressions to describe the city: "I liken Istanbul to a star among the constellations in beauty, a rose among flowers, the most precious among stones, a rainbow among clouds, and Julius Caesar among emperors" (p. 136). Upon his departure, he described his struggle to see as much as possible: "I was very sad to leave Istanbul. While contemplating this perfect city, my eyes and mind were in a struggle with each other to see more places, bewildered and admiring the beauties they beheld" (p. 136).

Baron de Tott (1978), arriving in 1755, held a great admiration for the strategic location. He argued that if a city were to be chosen as the capital of the world, it could only be Istanbul: "If the ambition to dominate the world were examined on a map and the most suitable city were sought as the world's capital, Istanbul would undoubtedly be worthy of this choice due to its position" (p. 14).

Figure 9: A View of Istanbul and Sarayburnu (Edmondo de Amicis, 2009, Engravings)

Levashov (2018), a diplomat held captive between 1763 and 1771, compared Istanbul to all of Europe, stating its unique geography could not even be imitated: “I have traveled almost all of Europe, but I have not seen a place like Istanbul in terms of both beauty and geography” (p. 39). He described the city as an “earthly paradise” (p. 53) and noted that Topkapı Palace reminded him of the Kremlin in Moscow (p. 45).

Domenico Sestini (2023), in his first book (Istanbul 1778), described being enchanted as he approached the city: “The majestic capital of the Ottoman Empire enchanted one first with its distant signs and then with all its dazzle from Yedikule to Sarayburnu. I watched the Turkish mosques with their beautiful architectures and their minarets with admiration and pleasure” (p. 47). He noted that words were inadequate to describe how nature and human activity were intertwined here more than anywhere else in the world: “In this city, the eyes know no satiety” (p. 47). In his second book (Bosphorus 1779), he praised Hünkâr İskelesi and Üsküdar, calling the latter “truly eye-catching” (Sestini, 2022, pp. 23-25).

Giovanni Battista Casti (2019), arriving in 1788, remarked: “A massive city covering the entire horizon began to appear” (p. 5). He found the reality far superior to any imagination: “Witnessing the beauty of Istanbul in person is superior, more surprising, and more magnificent than all the ideas and dreams one forms in the mind before seeing it. Before such a sight, everyone and everything remains very small” (p. 5). He described it as the “center of the world” (p. 6) and likened the Bosphorus to a giant theater stage (p. 13).

Olivier (1991), arriving in the 1790s, expressed his emotion upon seeing the Bosphorus: “Nature had given all its beauties to these places” (p. 15). He stated his reluctance to leave: “I did not want to leave this beautiful city, which is the capital of the Ottoman Empire” (p. 15).

Guillaume Martin (2007), arriving by sea in 1794, claimed there was no more enchanting sight in the world: “There can be no sight more fascinating than the view seen upon entering Istanbul by sea; it is an insatiable view” (p. 62). He emphasized that “Nature seems to have dedicated this place to be the center of the world” (p. 81) and noted that no European monarch likely possessed a palace as vast as the Sultan’s (p. 84).

Dr. William Wittman (2011), arriving in 1799, likened the harbor and surroundings to a painting: “The city, with its harbor and environs, offered a very beautiful view... It was a view that appeared entirely new and different to our eyes. We were faced with an extremely beautiful and picturesque scene”

(p. 3). He also noted the "amphitheater" effect created by the houses built on the seven hills (p. 7).

Joseph Von Hammer (2023), who was in Istanbul between 1799 and 1806, offered a poetic description, likening the scene to a "fictional image from the Arabian Nights" (p. 90). He legendaryized the Bosphorus, calling it a corner of paradise (p. 202).

Polyakov Nikolay (2025), visiting in the 19th century, explained the city's importance from a Russian perspective: "Who can forget while watching such a mesmerizing view that this is Byzantion—the cradle of our faith, the museum of our history, and long known as the Rome of the Russian people?" (p. 70).

CONCLUSION

Istanbul, as one of the most prominent centers of gravity for humanity's collective heritage, possesses an exceptional identity characterized by a profound historical memory. In its capacity as a "capital of empires," the city has garnered the interest of a wide spectrum of observers in every era—ranging from diplomats and merchants to pilgrims journeying to the Holy Land and scientists. Through their memoirs and works, Istanbul has been continually revitalized within the Western consciousness. The analysis conducted across the 65 diverse travelogues examined in this study reveals that Istanbul is not merely a geographical location but a captivating image meticulously constructed within the Western mind.

The data obtained regarding Istanbul's location, history, and nature within these travelogues demonstrate that the city is universally acknowledged as a "peerless beauty." Across the analyzed works, the immense excitement and curiosity felt by travelers from the very moment they approached the city constitute the common denominator of their narratives. Both male and female travelers were struck by a sense of awe—often described as a state where "words remain inadequate"—upon witnessing the panorama of Istanbul. Lady Craven's depiction of the city as an "earthly paradise" and De Amicis's metaphor of the "woman with a thousand lovers" symbolize the immutable impact Istanbul exerted across different centuries and cultures.

Despite belonging to diverse professions and nationalities, the poetic and artistic attitude displayed by travelers in the face of Istanbul is remarkable. By likening the city to an "amphitheater," a "plan drawn with sparkling stars," or a "scene from the Arabian Nights," these authors blended their rational observations with aesthetic admiration. Iconic landmarks such as the Hagia Sophia, the Bosphorus, and the Golden Horn were presented not merely as

structures or waterways but as manifestations of divine creative genius. This enchanting atmosphere led some writers to form such a profound connection with the city that they expressed desires to live and even die in this "Muslim paradise," occasionally to the point of questioning their own identities.

Ultimately, this research illustrates that Istanbul serves as a "world center" where diverse perspectives and inherent contradictions converge. For these travelers, Istanbul represented a unique laboratory where the West encountered the East, where history was animated in every corner, and where nature displayed its utmost generosity. These travel narratives provide the modern researcher with more than just a glimpse into 18th and 19th-century Istanbul; they offer a profound understanding of the aesthetic and emotional bridge constructed by the West toward the "other."

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